Buddhapālita's Commentary *on* Nāgārjuna's Middle Way

Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences series

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The American Institute of Buddhist Studies (AIBS) established the *Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences* series to provide authoritative translations, studies, and editions of the texts of the Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) and its associated literature. The Tibetan Tengyur is a vast collection of over 4,000 classical Indian Buddhist scientific treatises (*śāstra*) written in Sanskrit by over 700 authors from the first millennium CE, now preserved mainly in systematic 7th–12th century Tibetan translation. Its topics span all of India's "outer" arts and sciences, including linguistics, medicine, astronomy, socio-political theory, ethics, art, and so on, as well as all of her "inner" arts and sciences such as philosophy, psychology ("mind science"), meditation, and yoga.

Volumes in this series are numbered with catalogue numbers corresponding to both the "Comparative" (*dpe bsdur ma*) Kangyur and Tengyur ("CK" and "CT," respectively) and Derge (Tōhoku number) recensions of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka.

THE DALAI LAMA

Message

The foremost scholars of the holy land of India were based for many centuries at Nālandā Monastic University. Their deep and vast study and practice explored the creative potential of the human mind with the aim of eliminating suffering and making life truly joyful and worthwhile. They composed numerous excellent and meaningful texts. I regularly recollect the kindness of these immaculate scholars and aspire to follow them with unflinching faith. At the present time, when there is great emphasis on scientific and technological progress, it is extremely important that those of us who follow the Buddha should rely on a sound understanding of his teaching, for which the great works of the renowned Nālandā scholars provide an indispensable basis.

In their outward conduct the great scholars of Nālandā observed ethical discipline that followed the Pāli tradition, in their internal practice they emphasized the awakening mind of *bodhichitta*, enlightened altruism, and in secret they practised tantra. The Buddhist culture that flourished in Tibet can rightly be seen to derive from the pure tradition of Nālandā, which comprises the most complete presentation of the Buddhist teachings. As for me personally, I consider myself a practitioner of the Nālandā tradition of wisdom. Masters of Nālandā such as Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Āryāsaṅga, Dharmakīrti, Chandrakīrti, and Śāntideva wrote the scriptures that we Tibetan Buddhists study and practice. They are all my gurus. When I read their books and reflect upon their names, I feel a connection with them.

The works of these Nālandā masters are presently preserved in the collection of their writings that in Tibetan translation we call the Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*). It took teams of Indian masters and great Tibetan translators over four centuries to accomplish the historic task of translating them into

Tibetan. Most of these books were later lost in their Sanskrit originals, and relatively few were translated into Chinese. Therefore, the Tengyur is truly one of Tibet's most precious treasures, a mine of understanding that we have preserved in Tibet for the benefit of the whole world.

Keeping all this in mind, I am very happy to encourage a long-term project of the American Institute of Buddhist Studies, originally established by the late Venerable Mongolian Geshe Wangyal and now at the Columbia University Center for Buddhist Studies, and Tibet House US, in collaboration with Wisdom Publications, to translate the Tengyur into English and other modern languages, and to publish the many works in a collection called *The Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences*. When I recently visited Columbia University, I joked that it would take those currently working at the Institute at least three "reincarnations" to complete the task; it surely will require the intelligent and creative efforts of generations of translators from every tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, in the spirit of the scholars of Nālandā, although we may hope that using computers may help complete the work more quickly. As it grows, the *Treasury* series will serve as an invaluable reference library of the Buddhist Sciences and Arts. This collection of literature has been of immeasurable benefit to us Tibetans over the centuries, so we are very happy to share it with all the people of the world. As someone who has been personally inspired by the works it contains, I firmly believe that the methods for cultivating wisdom and compassion originally developed in India and described in these books preserved in Tibetan translation will be of great benefit to many scholars, philosophers, and scientists, as well as ordinary people.

I wish the American Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Columbia Center for Buddhist Studies, Tibet House US, and Wisdom Publications every success and pray that this ambitious and far-reaching project to create *The Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences* will be accomplished according to plan. I also request others who may be interested to extend whatever assistance they can, financial or otherwise, to help ensure the success of this historic project.

May 15, 2007

BUDDHAPĀLITA'S COMMENTARY ON NĀGĀRJUNA'S MIDDLE WAY

(*Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamaka-Vṛtti*)

by Buddhapālita

Introduction and Translation by
Ian James Coghlan

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our immutable compassionate guide,
for his long life and continued presence among us.

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I sincerely thank Daniel Aitken of Wisdom Publications and Robert A.F. Thurman of AIBS for accepting to publish this translation. Moreover, I am truly indebted to both Robert Thurman and Tom Yarnall at AIBS, and to Ben Gleason at Wisdom Publications, who have skillfully edited this work. Their careful reading of the manuscript and their many insightful suggestions and comments have greatly improved the translation.

Ian James Coghlan
Research Associate
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Translation Project Director

The project to translate Buddhapālita's commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Middle Way Verses* began with His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Sydney in

December 2009. During this visit His Holiness spoke of the importance of understanding Nāgārjuna's presentation of emptiness by relying on the commentaries of Chandrakīrti and Buddhapālita. In particular he praised Buddhapālita's commentary, and inspired by his words and the realization that no complete translation existed in English, the project to translate the text was born.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the following sponsors, whose generous support has contributed to the project to translate *Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*: Anonymous, Elaine & Chris Kang, Stephanie McGrane, Chan Yew Mun, Tony Steel, Majola Oosthuizen, Kerry Calcraft & Jamieson Lowe, Alan Carter, George Manos, Carey Idle, George Farley and Adele Hulse, Wolfgang Brandt, Ven. Tsapel, Esther Carter, John Waite, Hayagriva Centre, Pat Huynh, Gerald Noack, John Stretton, Ben Isbel, Mark Caristi, Jose Gonzalez, Phillipa Rutherford, Erick Tsiknopoulos, Diane Lookman, John Beattie and Maarit Termonen, Tamara Johnson, Yuchin Cheng, Ngawang Yeshe, and Ven. Thubten Pema.

Alan Carter
Translation Project Director

Copublisher Prefaces

Daniel Aitken

Wisdom Publications is honored to collaborate with the American Institute of Buddhist Studies. Under the guidance of Professor Robert Thurman, AIBS is fulfilling a critical role in the transmission of Buddhism into the English-speaking world through publishing the Indian Buddhist commentarial texts collected in the Tibetan Tengyur and its associated literature.

Well over a thousand years ago, the book that you now hold in your hands, *Buddhapālita's Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Middle Way*, which was originally composed in Sanskrit by the great Indian Buddhist philosopher Buddhapālita, sparked a debate that spanned centuries and engaged some of the greatest Buddhist philosopher-practitioners of India and Tibet. The topic at hand was how best to interpret the Middle Way teachings of Nāgārjuna so as to develop genuine insight into the nature of reality. Today the discussion continues within the debate yards of Buddhist monasteries and nunneries around the world and the journals of Western academia.

Given the importance of this work as one of the seminal texts in the Middle Way text tradition, this translation is an overdue and welcome addition to this *Treasury of Buddhist Sciences* series. It offers English readers the opportunity to encounter Buddhapālita's ideas not only by way of the reports of ancient and modern commentators but directly from Buddhapālita, albeit in translation.

I would like to thank and congratulate Dr. Ian Coghlan on such an excellent and authoritative translation. We are fortunate to have a translator so well trained in both the traditional monastic and Western academic worlds. Much appreciation is also owed to Robert Thurman and Tom

Yarnall at AIBS for their editorial shepherding of this book. Working with such talented people to publish these important texts is truly an inspiring endeavor.

Daniel Aitken
Copublisher
CEO, Wisdom Publications

Robert A.F. Thurman

This *Treasury* series is dedicated to making available in English and other languages the entire Tengyur (*bsTan 'gyur*), the collection of Sanskrit works preserved in Tibetan translations, and the originally Tibetan learned commentaries and treatises based upon them.

We are very delighted to publish the *Buddhapālita Commentary* on Noble Nāgārjuna's masterpiece, *Wisdom: The Central Way Root Verses*. I heartily congratulate Ian Coghlan for his precise and wonderful translation of this very difficult and important text of the great Indian philosopher. Nāgārjuna's works are always difficult, mind-boggling for the reader in that the peerless Indian thinker employs the sophisticated machinery of Indic Sanskrit linguistic philosophy to demolish our unreflective usage of language and logic itself. He thus helps us free the mind to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of reality. Though most of the past generations of philosophical scholars, Eastern as well as Western, wrongly thought of Nāgārjuna as a skeptic, or even sophist, just intent on demolishing all meaningfulness of all language and reason in the pursuit of a nihilistic agenda, a new generation is beginning to appreciate Nāgārjuna's liberative assistance, a kind of philosophical therapy. Indeed, this may have become more possible now due to the "linguistic turn" achieved by twentieth-century philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Derrida, as Western culture is just beginning to catch up with the more mature civilizations and philosophical disciplines of the East.

When the great Tibetan renaissance philosopher Tsong Khapa was at his deepest point in the study of Nāgārjuna and his successors, he had a key dream on the eve of what was later considered, on the evidence of his subsequent teaching and behavior, a peak enlightenment experience. He dreamed he was in the Tushita Heaven, in the teaching center of the

future buddha, Maitreya, in the presence of Nāgārjuna himself, Buddhapālita, Chandrakīrti, and others, who were engaged in a discussion of the finest points of Centrist critical thought. Tsong Khapa was in awe of this assemblage, hesitant on the periphery of the distinguished circle, when a tall, dark-skinned member of the group, whom Tsong Khapa somehow recognized as Buddhapālita, arose from his seat and approached the dreamer, carrying a book in his hands. Smiling, he held out the book and touched it on Tsong Khapa's bowed dream-body head. At the moment of its contact, Tsong Khapa felt a thrill of joy course though him, which woke him up in a vibrant state. As it happened, he had been reading the *Wisdom* book and had reached the eighteenth chapter, the "Critique of the Self." He turned to his retreat table and unwrapped the book, and, tracing the line of the verse, read, "The self is not the same as the psychophysical aggregates—the self is no other than the psychophysical aggregates." At that moment, as in a flash of lightning, everything became perfectly clear to him; all his perplexities about the nature of reality were resolved. It is said he attained the freedom of nirvana at that moment, and there is a tradition that he later said, most surprisingly, that "It was the opposite of what he had expected." This is especially surprising in that he was forty-one years of age and already one of the most celebrated scholars of Buddhist science and practitioners of its yogic disciplines, and so he should have known what to expect.

I tell the story because it is perhaps surprising to us that Buddhapālita was the one to give Tsong Khapa the final blessing, at the conclusion of a thirty-year quest. I thought of the story often as I read Ian Coghlan's fine translation, and there is no doubt that Buddhapālita's careful use of the *prasaṅga*—the absurd consequence following from a self-contradictory view held by a dogmatic realist philosopher whom Nāgārjuna's reasoning is designed to liberate—powerfully amplifies the effect of the logical insight and opening of the mind the critique conveys. This makes me all the more grateful to the translator and appreciative of his achievement, that he has enabled us now to study the *Wisdom* through the lens of Buddhapālita's crystal clarity.

As ever, I must express thanks to the numerous donors and foundations who continue to assist our monumental project, especially the William T. Kistler Foundation. I also add my sincere thanks to my copublisher and

co-editor, Dr. Daniel Aitken, and to Ben Gleason and his staff and production team at Wisdom Publications, as well as a special acknowledgment of the labor of love and skill given by Thomas Yarnall, our designer, scholarly colleague, and executive editor.

Robert A.F. Thurman
Copublisher/Series Editor-in-Chief
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President, American Institute of Buddhist Studies
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Abbreviations and Typographical Conventions

NOTE: See Bibliographies for full citations.

[. . .]	Material introduced by translators in translation to facilitate English readability
ABh	*Akutobhayā* (*Mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtty-akutobhayā*), by Nāgārjuna
BP	*Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti*, by Buddhapālita
CŚ	*Catuḥśataka*, by Āryadeva
D	Derge (*sde dge*) edition of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon
MK	*Mūlamadhyamakakārika* (*Prajñānāma-mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*), by Nāgārjuna
MK(B)	Tibetan translation of *Mūlamadhyamakakārika*, translated by Jñānagarbha and Chokro Lui Gyaltsen
MK(C)	Tibetan translation of *Mūlamadhyamakakārika* translated by Mahāsumati and Patsab Nyimadrak
MK(S)	Sanskrit version of *Mūlamadhyamakakārika*, based on PSP
PP	*Prajñāpradīpa* (*Prajñāpradīpa mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti*), by Bhāvaviveka
PPT	*Prajñāpradīpa-ṭīkā*, by Avalokitavrata
PSP	*Prasannapadā* (*Mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti-prasannapadā*), by Chandrakīrti
TCE	Tibetan Critical Edition of the BP (see bibliography)

Typographical Conventions

Numbering for MK root chapters and verses are formatted with Arabic numerals using the following convention: chapter:verse (e.g., 24:7). Numbering for chapters and verses cited from any other canonical text (e.g., Āryadeva's CŚ) are formatted using Roman numerals for chapters and Arabic numerals for verses using the following convention: chapter:verse (e.g., xiv:25). Gray page numbers in square brackets (e.g., [36]) are references to the folios in TCE.

We have strived generally to present Tibetan and Sanskrit names and terms in a phonetic form to facilitate pronunciation. For most Sanskrit terms this has meant that—while we generally have kept conventional diacritics for vowels—we have added an *h* to convey certain sounds that the general reader will mispronounce without it (thus *ś*, *ṣ*, and *c* are rendered as *sh*, *ṣh*, and *ch* respectively). For Sanskrit terms that have entered the English lexicon (such as "nirvana"), we use no diacritical marks. In more technical contexts (notes, bibliographies, appendixes, and so on) we use full standard diacritical conventions for Sanskrit, and Wylie transliterations for Tibetan.

Part One

Introduction

Introduction

Investigating the nature of reality remains a unique human challenge, and in the vast ocean of such intellectual inquiry there are various gems, some precious, some rare, but seldom both. When Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250) composed his *Wisdom: Fundamental Middle Way Verses* (MK) to explain the Buddha's Perfection of Wisdom, he produced such a rare and precious gem. Nāgārjuna's subtle and nuanced work seeks to unpack the process of conceptual fabrication and thus reveal the final nature of reality. But tracing the subtle path of his logic presents numerous difficulties. This task, however, was taken up by Buddhapālita (ca. 470–540), who composed the treatise translated here, a work that makes plain Nāgārjuna's deep insight into the Buddha's presentation of emptiness.

According to Tāranātha,[1] Buddhapālita was born in Haṁsakrīḍa in Tambala[2] in South India. At an early age he received ordination (*pravrajyā*), entered formal study, and became learned in Buddhist scriptures. In due course, he began to read the works of Nāgārjuna under the guidance of Saṁgharakṣhita, who was a student of Nāgamitra, gaining insight into their meaning through intense meditation. Later he taught at Dantapurī Monastery and while there composed many commentaries to the works of Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Shūra, and so on.[3]

Buddhapālita's only extant work is his commentary to Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MK), called *Buddhapālitamūlamadhyamakavṛtti* (BP). Nāgārjuna composed his seminal work after the Fourth Buddhist Council convened by Kaniṣhka, in which the views of the eighteen Vaibhāṣhika schools were codified. He raised issues found in the Vaibhāṣhika

1. He is our only source on his life, but as Lindtner (1981, 2) points out, this cannot be verified.
2. A town of the same name, Tāṁbala, exists today in Maharashtra state, near Gulbarga.
3. Tāranātha, p. 216.

Abhidharmika piṭakas not to deny their phenomenology—for this is clearly sourced in the Buddha's sūtras—but rather to lead Abhidharmikas to the more nuanced Mādhyamika interpretation of reality.

Buddhapālita describes Nāgārjuna's treatise as "Great Vehicle Abhidharma, that perfectly elucidates ultimate reality (*de kho na*), and clarifies the system of the *Perfection of Wisdom*." In Tibet, Abhidharma was classified in two: (1) Upper Abhidharma (*mngon pa gong ma*), which referred to Great Vehicle Abhidharma of the Cittamātra and Madhyamaka schools as presented in Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* and the *Extremely Extensive Sūtra*; and (2) Lower Abhidharma (*mngon pa 'og ma*), which referred to the Abhidharma of the Vaibhāṣhika and Sautrāntika schools as presented by Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*. Nāgārjuna's treatise presents a series of debates between exponents of Upper Abhidharma as set forth in the second and third turnings of the wheel of Dharma and exponents of Lower Abhidharma as set out in the first turning of the wheel. In this translation the term "Abhidharmikas" refers to the proponents of lower Abhidharma.

Buddhapālita's work is one of eight acknowledged commentaries to Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.[4] These eight were composed by Nāgārjuna, Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka, Chandrakīrti, Devasharman, Guṇashrī, Guṇamati, and Sthiramati. According to later Tibetan scholars the first four are Mādhyamikas while the last four Yogāchāras, and they also classify Buddhapālita and Chandrakīrti as Prāsaṅgikas, and Bhāvaviveka as a Svātantrika. Today the works of just four of these eight scholars exist in the Tibetan canon: Nāgārjuna's *Akutobhayā* (ABh), Buddhapālita's *Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti* (BP), Bhāvaviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa* (PP), and Chandrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* (PSP). Two exist in the Chinese canon: *Zhonglun* (T.D. no. 1824) of Qingmu[5] and Sthiramati's *Dasheng zhong guan shilun* (T.D. no. 1567).

Buddhapālita's commentary is a work of great clarity and insight. It adheres to a methodology championed by Nāgārjuna where merely stating the unwanted consequence (*prasaṅga*) of an opponent's view is seen to be sufficient to refute it. His younger contemporary Bhāvaviveka (ca. 490–570) also composed a commentary to Nāgārjuna's work called *Prajñāpradīpa* (PP) in which he criticized Buddhapālita's interpretation of Nāgārjuna's methodology. Bhāvaviveka's criticism reveals his belief in

4. See Saito 1984, p. xxii.
5. This may refer to Piṅgala.

autonomous inference (*svātantranumana*; *rang rgyud rjes dpag*)—that the generation of a valid conception in the mind of the opponent relies on expressing an autonomous syllogism, one in which the components of the syllogism possessed intrinsic reality (*svabhāva*). For him, that alone has the ontological force necessary to initiate and complete the process of generating realization.[6]

Chandrakīrti (ca. 600–ca. 660), a revered abbot of Nālandā, composed the *Prasannapadā* (PSP) as a commentary to MK in which he defends Buddhapālita's BP. Chandrakīrti cites Buddhapālita's position, and argues against Bhāvaviveka's assertion of the need to state autonomous syllogisms to generate realization in an opponent. For him, as well as Buddhapālita, merely the statement of an unwanted consequence was sufficient to frame the fault of an opponent's position, to generate realization of that fault and the realization of the reality implied therein.

Founders of the Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika systems

Since Bhāvaviveka was the first person to clearly distinguish the Svātantrika system from that of the Prāsaṅgika, he was regarded by later Tibetan scholars as the founder of the Svātantrika system. So too since Chandrakīrti was the first to clearly distinguish the Prāsaṅgika view from the Svātantrika, he was regarded as the founder of the Prāsaṅgika system. Since Chandrakīrti's explanation arises within the commentarial stream of Buddhapālita, some assert Buddhapālita to be the actual founder of the Prāsaṅgika system. But in general it is agreed that though Nāgārjuna and Buddhapālita clearly taught the Prāsaṅgika system, neither is the founder of the Prāsaṅgika school because historically neither clearly set forth this view in contradistinction to the Svātantrika position.

Tibetan Translation of BP

The Tibetan translation of BP was undertaken by the Indian abbot Jñānagarbha (eighth century) and Chokro Lui Gyaltsen (ca. 780–860). Jñānagarbha was born in Oḍivisha,[7] studied under Shrīgupta[8] at Nālandā

6. For a concise presentation of Nāgārjuna's method, see Westerhoff 2009, chapters 1–4, 10.
7. Tāranātha p. 253.
8. Tāranātha p. 252. He was a disciple of Sampradūta. Tāranātha p. 225.

and was a teacher of Shāntarakṣhita (ca. 725–88). He followed Bhāvaviveka's Svātantrika system,[9] and came to Tibet during the reign of King Trisong Detsen (ruled 755–97). Chokro Lui Gyaltsen is listed as one of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava. In traditional sources (*chos 'byung, lo rgyu*), he is regarded as a Svātantrika Mādhyamika, and like Jñānagarbha, a follower of Bhāvaviveka's system. As a translator, he worked with Kawa Paltsek on translations for Padmasambhava,[10] he is listed as one of the three youthful translators (*gzhon pa gsum*) called "Ka Chok Zhang,"[11] and he is named one of nine supreme translators (*rab dgu*)[12] under King Trisong Detsen.

Order of Translations of Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen

Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen worked together on a series of translations of core Madhyamaka texts. Internal evidence suggests the order in which they were translated. In particular, Akira Saito[13] suggests that the Jñānagarbha–Lui Gyaltsen translations were undertaken in the following order: first PP and PPT along with MK, then ABh, then BP.

This order suggests that the translation of BP was influenced by Bhāvaviveka's PP, and the translators relied on Bhāvaviveka's text as a key to unlocking the terminology of the MK.

It is likely that Bhāvaviveka's criticism of Buddhapālita sowed seeds of doubt in the minds of some Tibetans regarding the soundness of Buddhapālita's work. And it is significant that no Tibetan explanatory commentaries to Buddhapālita's work exist in the Tibetan canon. Thus for over two hundred years in Tibet, during the period of the early transmission of Dharma (*snga dar*), Buddhapālita's commentary received little attention.

Then in the period of the later transmission (*phyi dar*) Atisha (982–1054)[14] was invited to Tibet, arriving in 1042. In terms of Madhyamaka

9. Tāranātha p. 388. Buston regarded him as a Yogācāra-mādhyamika. Tāranātha p. 389.
10. Orgyen Linga. pp. 412–41. According to *Padma bka' thang*, under the reign of Trisong Detsen, Kawa Paltsek, and Chokro Lui Gyaltsen worked on translations with Padmasambhava.
11. *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*, p. 104.
12. *The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary*, p. 2811.
13. Saito 1984, pp. xvii-xix.
14. Atisha was invited to Tibet to help reestablish Buddhism and Buddhist institutions after the death of King Lang Darma (ninth century), who sought to eradicate Buddhist influence from the land.

studies, he advised local scholars to read Chandrakīrti's works. He writes in his *Entering the Two Truths* (verse 15):[15]

> Who is the one who has realized emptiness?
> It is Chandrakīrti, disciple of Nāgārjuna,
> Who was predicted by the Tathāgata
> As one who sees the truth of reality.
> By the instruction transmitted through him,
> One will realize the truth of reality.

It appears that no translations of Chandrakīrti's works were made prior to Atisha, and his recommendation for one inspired Mahāsumati and Patsab Nyimadrak (b. 1045) to translate Chandrakīrti's PSP and to revise Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen's translation of MK.

Mahāsumati (eleventh century) was a Kashmiri pandit who collaborated with Nyimadrak of the Ratnagupta vihara to translate PSP. Nyimadrak was born in the Patsab region in Penyul, and later traveled to Kashmir, where he studied for twenty-three years. On returning to Tibet he was requested to translate important works such as Pūrṇavardhana's *Abhidharmakośaṭīkālakṣaṇānusāriṇī* before he then turned to translating works of Madhyamaka.[16]

Translation Sequence of Mahāsumati and Nyimadrak

The order of their translations appears to be PSP, MK, then CŚ.[17] It makes sense that Mahāsumati and Nyimadrak began with PSP, which is a detailed commentary that clarifies the terms used in MK. Further, it contains the broadest range of supplementary relevant explanatory terms, and, by addressing this commentary first, the meaning of the root text is explained by an authoritative source. Given this is the order of translation, it would mirror the approach taken by Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen.

The translation of MK by Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen is regarded as no less reliable than that of Mahāsumati and Nyimadrak.[18] But in the

15. *Entering the Two Truths* (D 3902: 72b4–5).
16. *Blue Annals*, p. 341.
17. Saito 1984, p. xviii.
18. Ibid.

centuries since Mahāsumati and Nyimadrak translated MK and PSP, their translation has become the standard source, while Buddhapālita's work has acted more as a reference. This process is also evident in the way the Madhyamaka lineage is cited in Tibet. For instance in accordance with Tang Sagpa[19] (twelfth century), the lineage is: the Buddha, Rāhulabhadra, Nāgārjuna, Chandrakīrti, Mañjukīrti, Devachandra, Ratnavajra, Parāhita, Mahāsumati, Patsab Nyimadrak, and so on.[20] Interestingly, Buddhapālita is not included, nor Jñānagarbha and Chokro Lui Gyaltsen, which implies their particular branch lineage did not endure separately. Still, the authority of Buddhapālita's commentary remains unquestioned. For instance, it is widely held that Jey Tsong Khapa (1357–1419) relied on Buddhapālita's commentary to attain direct insight into emptiness, for this he achieved while reading chapter 18, the Critique of Self and Phenomena.[21]

Discovery of Sanskrit Fragments of *Buddhapālitavṛtti* in Tibet

Sanskrit fragments of palm-leaf manuscripts of *Buddhapālitavṛtti* tentatively dated to the seventh century were found in Tibet, the earliest discovered on ancient Madhyamaka literature. In 1961 these fragments were brought from Tibet to China by the Ethnic Library of Beijing, then returned to Tibet in 1993.

In all eleven folios were identified as Buddhapālita's Commentary, comprising fifty-seven verses with commentary, approximately one-twelfth of the text. These have been published by Ye Shaoyong, who suggests that the new fragments confirm that MK existed in different versions, and concludes, "The philological task of scholars working on the MK is no longer as simple as to pursue a 'better' reading, but to draw a genealogy of its transmission."[22] Such a genealogy will depend on acquiring significantly more data.

19. Tang Sagpa or Zhang Thang Sagpa Yeshé Jungné was one of the four main disciples of Patsab Nyimadrak (1055–1114). He founded the Tang Sag Monastery in Penyul (*phan yul*) and composed various commentaries on Madhyamaka, but a number of later Geluk masters regarded his view as embracing nihilism. See Chizuko Yoshimizu 2005, 127–64.
20. *Blue Annals*, p. 344.
21. For a detailed description of this event, see Thurman 1984, 84–85. See also Jinpa's (2019) biography of Tsong Khapa, and Thurman's (2018) life story of Tsong Khapa in *Life and Teachings* (2018, Part 1).
22. Ye 2007b, 150.

Structure

It is common for early Sanskrit treatises to omit any detailed presentation of text structure, and this is also true of Nāgārjuna's treatise and Buddhapālita's commentary. Such works assume an educated reader who is well versed in textual studies.

In terms of general structure, MK and BP comprise twenty-seven chapters.[23] The common topic of all twenty-seven chapters is dependent origination, while the specific topic of each chapter is drawn from the Abhidharma piṭaka. Further, the way each chapter delineates its individual topic takes the form of a dialogue between a Mādhyamika proponent and an Abhidharmika opponent.

The first twenty-six chapters teach how dependent origination is empty of intrinsic reality, and the twenty-seventh chapter teaches how erroneous views are abandoned.

Chapters 1–2 teach the two types of selflessness in brief: (1) Critique of Conditions teaches selflessness of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self of phenomena exists because the agent and object of conditions exist. (2) Critique of Going and Coming teaches selflessness of person by refuting the argument that a self exists because the agent and action of going and coming exist.

Chapters 3–23 teach selflessness in detail.

Chapters 3–8 teach selflessness of phenomena.

Chapters 3–5 teach three types [of selflessness]: (3) Critique of Sense Bases refutes a self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because the six sense bases such as the eyes exist. (4) Critique of Aggregates refutes a self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because the five aggregates such as form exist. (5) Critique of Elements refutes a self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because the six elements such as space exist.

Chapters 6–8 refute arguments that those three have a self: (6) Critique of Attachment and One Who Is Attached refutes the self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because attachment and one who is attached exist. (7) Critique of Arising, Enduring, and Disintegrating refutes

23. For a detailed presentation of the structure of MK, refer to the outlines given throughout Samten and Garfield's (2010) *Ocean of Reasoning*.

the self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because characteristics exist. (8) Critique of the Agent and Action refutes a self of phenomena by refuting the argument that a self exists because cause, agent, and action exist.

Chapters 9–12 explain the selflessness of person: (9) Critique of Appropriator and Appropriated refutes the self of person by refuting the reason in the argument that a self exists because the appropriator and that appropriated exist. (10) Critique of Fire and Fuel refutes the self of person by refuting the example in the argument that a self exists because the appropriator and that appropriated exist, for example fire and fuel. (11) Critique of Samsara refutes the self of person by refuting the reason in the argument that a self exists because samsara exists. (12) Critique of Suffering refutes the self of person by refuting the reason in the argument that a self exists because suffering exists.

Chapters 13–17 teach the emptiness of phenomena: (13) Critique of Formations teaches that things lack intrinsic reality without differentiating phenomena and persons. (14) Critique of Contact refutes contact between phenomena. (15) Critique of Things and Nonthings refutes appropriation through causes and conditions. (16) Critique of Bondage and Liberation refutes cycling from one [life] to another. (17) Critique of Karma and Its Effect refutes the argument that an intrinsically existent samsara is the basis of karmic causation.

Chapter 18 (Critique of Self and Phenomena) teaches the need to first gain certainty that the objects of the ignorance that grasps "I" and "mine" do not exist.

Chapters 19–21 teach the emptiness of time: (19) Critique of Time refutes intrinsically existent things as the cause of designating the three times. (20) Critique of Cause and Effect refutes intrinsically existent time as the cooperative condition of the effect. (21) Critique of Emergence and Destruction refutes time as the cause of the emergence and destruction of the effect.

Chapters 22–23 teach the emptiness of the continuum of existence: (22) Critique of the Tathāgata refutes the Tathāgata being the result of the continuum of existence. (23) Critique of Misconception refutes the existence of causal affliction for that is untenable.

Chapters 24–25 respond to rebuttals: (24) Critique of Noble Truths responds to the argument that if all phenomena are empty, then the four

truths and so on are untenable, by teaching that all presentations on the emptiness of intrinsic reality are fully acceptable and any presentation on nonemptiness is not acceptable. (25) Critique of Nirvana responds to the argument that nirvana is untenable if intrinsic reality does not exist.

Chapter 26, Critique of the Twelve Links of Existence, teaches the need to stop ignorance, for one enters samsara by the power of ignorance and one exists samsara through stopping ignorance.

Chapter 27, Critique of View, teaches that if one sees dependent origination, one will not depend on erroneous views.[24]

Translation sources

The source of this translation is *Buddhapālita's Commentary to the Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way*, published by Drepung Loseling Education Society,[25] referred to throughout as the Tibetan critical edition [TCE]. The editors of this work have taken the Derge (*sde dge*) Tengyur edition of BP as the basis and carefully compared it with the comparative (*dpe bsdur ma*) edition published in Tibet. They have then added footnotes that mark variations from the text that occur in the Chone (*co ne*), Narthang (*snar thang*), and Peking (*pe cing*) editions.[26] The end result is a reliable and approachable text that provides ready access to alternate Tibetan translations of the source Sanskrit treatise.

In terms of Sanskrit sources, I have relied on different Sanskrit editions of MK, such as the the Vaidya (1960) edition, and from time to time I have consulted the Sanskrit text reproduced by Siderits and Katsura (2013) in their *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way*. I have also consulted Ye Shaoyong's (2007a, 2007b, 2008) articles analyzing the Sanskrit passages of BP found in Tibet.

In terms of Tibetan sources, I have consulted such works as Tsong Khapa's *Ocean of Reasoning: Great Commentary to Fundamental Wisdom* (*Rtsa she ṭik chen rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*), *Essence of Eloquence: Provisional and Definite Meaning* (*Drang nges legs bshad snying po*), and *Elucidation of Madhyamaka*

24. Buddhapālita, 2017, pp. xxii–xxvi. This summary is based on the presentation given here.
25. Buddhapālita. *Buddhapālita's Commentary to the Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way* [TCE]. *Dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba ḍang de'i 'grel pa Buddhapālita. Buddhapālita-mūlamadhyamaka-vṛtti*. Drepung Loseling Educational Society, Delhi, 2015, 2017.
26. Buddhapālita, 2017, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

Thought (*Dbu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*), and Sera Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltsen's *General Meaning of Madhyamaka* (*Dbu ma spyi don*) and *General Meaning Delineating Provisional and Definitive Meaning* (*Drang nges rnam 'byed kyi spyi don*).

In terms of English translations, I have consulted the excellent work of others such as Akiro Saito, Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura, and Geshe Ngawang Samten and Jay Garfield, to name but a few.

Translation

Buddhapālita's commentary [BP] now exists only in Tibetan, though Sanskrit fragments have been discovered in Tibet and identified by Ye Shaoyong. This work does not seek to analyze these fragments, nor does it seek to compare the Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen translation of MK with the translation by Mahāsumati and Nyimadrak two centuries later. These tasks are important but lie beyond the scope of the current work.

The aim of this translation is to provide, as much as possible, an accessible and readable translation of what remains a very difficult and challenging text. The process of translating this work from Tibetan to English resembles the task that confronted Jñānagarbha and Lui Gyaltsen when they translated the work from Sanskrit to Tibetan over a thousand years ago. Central to this project is finding a balance between accuracy and readability. If the translators seek to rigidly reproduce the grammar of the source language, the translation may appear formulaic, grammatically constrained, even unreadable. If a looser approach is taken, where the grammar is taken more as a general guide than a template, the translation may lack critical accuracy even though it is accessible. Finding the middle ground is tricky, and difficult to maintain in a longer work.

Sections (*bam po*) are marked throughout the translation. There are ten in total that divide the Tibetan text into ten equal parts, to maintain the integrity of the original text.

Page numbers occur in square brackets and indicate the page numbers of the Tibetan critical edition [TCE].

At times I have chosen to follow variant readings of the Tibetan, and such variations are indicated in footnotes.

Nāgārjuna's name has been added to the translation when Buddhapālita is about to cite Nāgārjuna's root text, so his words may be easily identified by

the reader. Technically, in such cases, when the name doesn't actually occur in the text, it should only be added in square brackets. But since brackets add clutter, they have not been included.

Regarding the terminology of BP, the three terms "reality" (*chos nyid, dharmatā*), "thatness" (*de kho na, tattva*), and "suchness" (*de bzhin nyid, tathatā*) are synonyms, and the last two have also been glossed as "reality."

In general the two terms "intrinsic reality" (*ngo bo nyid, svabhāva*) and "essential nature" (*rang bzhin, prakṛti*) are synonymous; at times the Sanskrit term *svabhāva* has also been translated by the Tibetan term *rang bzhin.* They should be regarded as interchangeable.

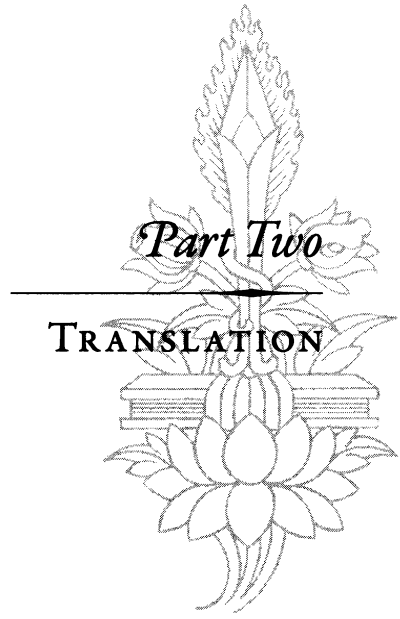
Two terms, "thing" (*dngos po, bhāva*) and "nonthing" (*dngos med, abhāva*), form a dichotomy where all impermanent phenomena are included in things, and all permanent phenomena are included in nonthings. Nonthing may refer to a nonfunctional thing such as a broken vase. It may also refer to the nonexistence of a thing such as the nonexistence of an elephant in a room, or the nonexistence of a nonexistent phenomenon, such as selflessness. Further, "entity" (*dngos po, bhāva*) has been used as a substitute for "thing," especially when applied to living beings.

Finally, I request the patience of scholars for any mistakes and errors that remain in the translation.

Summation

Mahāyāna excels other vehicles by presenting countless lines of reasoning to establish emptiness, and Buddhapālita's commentary follows this noble tradition by formulating consequences denying intrinsic reality (*svabhāva*) from diverse and varied perspectives. In doing so it profoundly confronts our preconceptions about the world and ourselves. It urges us to look deep within so that we may glimpse our underlying conceptual flaws, disentangle ourselves from our negative emotions, and establish the means to purify our minds. It is a work of decisive insight and disarming humor, and demonstrates the unique kindness of Nāgārjuna and Buddhapālita.

Ian Coghlan
Khancoban 2020



Part Two

Translation

Preliminary

In Sanskrit: *Buddhapālita-Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti*
In Tibetan: *Dbu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel pa Buddhapālita.*

Section One

I pay homage to the Three Jewels.
I pay homage to youthful Mañjushrī.
I pay homage to the master Ārya Nāgārjuna.
I pay homage to the master Venerable Buddhapālita.

The master [Nāgārjuna] sees the profound state of dependent origination perfectly as it is, and with a mind full of amazement he is inspired to reveal dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) [to others]. Thus with eyes moist with tears of faith and his body hair standing on end, he joins his palms and raises them to his crown. Then he proclaims the [following] verses to the Holy Guru Tathāgata as if [Shākyamuni] were there before him, [verses] that reveal the ultimate truth that the tathāgatas are in fact the dharmakāya.

I pay homage to the perfect Buddha
Who is supreme among teachers
Who taught dependent origination
That is without cessation, without arising, (0:1)
Without annihilation, without permanence,
Without coming, without going, [36]

Without distinction, without identity,
That is peaceful and fully pacifies all fabrication. (0:2)[27]

I pay homage to the perfect complete Buddha, who is supreme among teachers and who taught this supremely profound ultimate truth called dependent origination that is without cessation, without arising, without annihilation, without permanence, without coming, without going, without distinction, and without identity.

He taught the true path—that is peaceful, that leads to the city of nirvana, and fully pacifies all [mental] fabrication—to those in the world who wander in the dense proliferation of theories regarding a creator, time, atoms, essential nature,[28] intrinsic reality[29] and so on, due to their adherence to the existence of a prior cause.

The Bhagavān fully understands all non-Buddhists, who oppose [perfect view] to be like deceived children, and he taught dependent origination to just such blind reincarnating beings who grope [in the darkness]. Master [Nāgārjuna] called you "supreme among teachers," since you see perfectly.

He states "without cessation" means that cessation does not exist, and this should be applied to the remaining [seven] characteristics in just the same way. These verses resemble [passages from] sūtra, and the rest [of Nāgārjuna's] treatise explains [the meaning of] these verses. Moreover, [these chapters] provide multiple access points to the subject matter according to one's preference, and their order should not be taken as fixed.

Objection: What need is there to teach dependent origination?

Response: The compassionate master saw that sentient beings are still harassed by various types of suffering. Thus in order to liberate beings, he generated the wish to give proper instruction [37] on the perfect reality of things, for it is said:[30]

27. MK(S): "*anirodhamanutpādamanucchedamaśāśvataṁ/*
anekārthamanānārthamanāgamamanirgamaṁ"/
yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaṁ prapañcopaśamaṁ śivaṁ/
deśayāmāsa saṁbuddhastaṁ vande vadatāṁ varaṁ/
28. Essential nature (*rang bzhin, prakṛti*).
29. Intrinsic reality (*ngo bo nyid, svabhāva*).
30. The source of this passage cited in BP has not been identified.

Those who see what is untrue [as true] are bound.
Those who see what is true are liberated.

Question: What is the true reality of things?

Response: It is the lack of any intrinsic reality.[31] But for those who are untrained, the eye of intelligence is obscured by the darkness of delusion. If things are conceived to possess an intrinsic reality, this gives rise to attachment or aversion to them. But whenever dependent origination appears to the mind, the darkness of delusion is eliminated, and the eye of wisdom sees that things lack any intrinsic reality. At that time attachment and aversion do not arise [for things] that are impossible.

Thus, for example, when the thought arises that the reflection of a woman "is a woman," attachment is strongly generated and the mind craves for union with her. But when one realizes the true state exactly as it is, the thought of a woman ceases. Freed from lust, one feels great shame, and one blames one's ordinary mind for generating lust for something that does not exist.[32] The Bhagavān stated on many occasions:[33]

Monks, do not view the internal female organ as real.
Monks, when [near] a female, do not view the internal female organ as real.

Because of that Master Āryadeva also stated:[34]

Consciousness is the seed of existence,
Objects are its object-field.
When objects are seen to be selfless,
The seed of existence ceases. (xiv:25)

31. Lack of intrinsic reality (*ngo bo nyid med pa nyid, niḥsvabhāvatā*).
32. TCE (p. 37): "One blames one's ordinary [or natural] mind for generating lust for something that does not exist" (*rang bzhin gyi sems gnas med pa la 'dod chags skye ba la 'phya ba*); Peking version (p. 37 note 6): "One blames one's own mind for generating lust for something that does not exist" (*rang sems gnas med pa la 'dod chags skye ba la 'phya ba*).
33. The source of this passage cited in BP has not been identified.
34. CŚ, xiv:25. TCE (p. 221): *srid pa'i sa bon rnam shes te, yul rnams de yi spyol yul lo, yul la bdag med mthongs na ni, srid pa'i sa bon 'gag par 'gyur*. Derge (D 3846: 16a5): *srid pa'i sa bon rnam shes te, yul rnams de yi spyod yul lo, yul la bdag med mthong nas ni, srid pa'i sa bon 'gag par 'gyur*.

Master [Nāgārjuna] composed this treatise in order to fully demonstrate the lack of any intrinsic reality of things.

Objection: If the Tathāgata—who knows everything, sees [38] everything, and possesses great compassion—has already explained and clearly delineated dependent origination to various beings in different ways, what need is there [for Nāgārjuna] to repeat his clear presentation?

Response: Indeed it is true that the Tathāgata himself has already explained and clearly presented dependent origination. But now those who explain and teach such terms as "arising" and so on are influenced by [their] common usage,[35] and with minds that cling to mere words they do not comprehend the supremely profound state of dependent origination. They think things in fact exist because they are described as "arising" and "ceasing," or "coming" and "going." They think existent phenomena are permanent or annihilated, identical or distinct. They think nonexistent phenomena such as the horns of a rabbit do not arise.

Master [Nāgārjuna] has composed this work reliant on logic and scripture to clearly teach the nature of dependent origination. The Tathāgata explained and clearly articulated dependent origination for that purpose alone, and it is appropriate that Master [Nāgārjuna] later clearly articulated it for just this purpose. How could it be suitable for him to later clearly present what was not explained [earlier] nor clearly articulated [by the Tathāgata]? So too, it is due to former masters explaining and clearly articulating treatises on worldly topics, that their students later teach such treatises. Therefore it is appropriate that Master [Nāgārjuna] clearly presents this after [the Tathāgata has already done so].

Objection: Why do you negate all eight terms such as "cessation"? Can't you merely state:

> . . . [W]ithout cessation, without arising,
> Without annihilation, without permanence (0:1d–0:2a)

35. Common usage (*'jig rten kyi tha snyad, lokavyavahāra*).

Response: Those who advocate that a thing has intrinsic reality [39] teach that the eight terms such as "cessation"—that are primarily taught according to their everyday usage—refer to a thing that [actually] exists, hence these eight terms such as "cessation" are negated. So too, those who theorize about reality (*tattva*) or initiate disputes about reality theorize or dispute in reliance on such terms as "cessation" and so on.

Here [Vaibhāṣhikas[36]] say: All things that possess the properties of arising and cessation are momentary because they arise continuously within a stream.[37]

[Vaisheṣhikas] say: The nine substances such as earth are permanent.[38]

Also [the Jains] say: The six substances such as the principle of motion, the principle of rest, space, time, matter, and beings, are permanent.[39]

So too in general they argue about whether lifeforce and the body, fire and fuel, cause and effect, qualities and those possessing qualities, parts and wholes, are identical or distinct.

Furthermore [the Sāṁkhya] say: Those who possess [the three] qualities and action are said to "eternally cycle."[40]

Others say: Neither atoms nor the mind function.[41]

[Jains] assert: Both beings and matter possess movement. Once established, they proceed upwards.

Therefore he negates the eight terms such as "cessation," since it is due to them that beings theorize and initiate disputes about reality.

36. Saito 1984, 5–6. Here I follow Saito's identification of these schools.

37. The Vaibhāṣhikas are one of the four main schools of Buddhism: Vaibhāṣhikas, Sautrāntikas, Cittamātrins, and Madhyamakas. Vaibhāṣhikas assert that conditioned entities exist within a continuous causal stream of momentary substance.

38. The Vaisheṣhikas are one the six schools of Indian Vedic philosophy. They assert all objects are included in six categories: substance (*dravya*), qualities (*guṇa*), karma, generality (*sāmānya*), particularity (*viśeṣa*), and inherence (*samavāya*). Here substance is again divided in nine: earth (*pṛthvī*), water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*), wind (*vāyu*), ether (*ākaśa*), time (*kāla*), space (*dik*), self (*ātman*), mind (*manas*).

39. An ancient Indian religion based on the teachings of Mahāvīra, the last of a succession of twenty-four Tirthankaras. They assert six permanent substances: beings (*jiva*), matter (*pudgala*), principle of motion (*dharma*), principle of rest (*adharma*), space (*ākāśa*), and time (*kāla*).

40. An ancient Indian philosophical school that asserted three qualities or innate tendencies (*guṇas*)—goodness (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), and darkness (*tamas*)—that are possessed by matter.

41. The specific school that is making this assertion is unclear.

Objection: Why is "cessation" negated first and "arising" negated later? I think it is logical to state "without arising, without cessation. . . ."

Response: The [original order] should not be faulted. Why? Because those skilled in language ascertain how priority is applied according to grammatical rules, but others do not ascertain this. [40]

Objection: If arising exists, cessation will occur, but if [arising] does not exist, [cessation] will not occur. Therefore in accordance with the proper order, first "arising" must be stated.

Response: Friend, give an example that would generate conviction in your assertion "Arising is earlier and cessation is later."

Objection: Anything could serve as an example. In what way? For instance, it is like the statement: "Birth is pointless. Why? Because when birth exists, then enemies such as aging and death, illness and suffering, killing and bondage, exist."

Response: But some think that death precedes any birth for which death exists. If death does not precede [birth], then it would absurdly follow that samsara would have a beginning, but that is unacceptable. Therefore because samsara has no beginning or end, it cannot be stated that birth is first and death follows, or death is first and birth follows. Also Nāgārjuna[42] states below:

> If birth were to occur earlier
> And aging and death later
> Birth would be without aging and death
> And birth would arise even without dying. (11:3)

Objection: But if birth is devoid of such perils, then [birth] would not be pointless. Just as, if trees did not grow, then a forest would not exist, and it would not be harmed by wind. This is another example.

42. Though Nāgārjuna's name is not explicitly stated in the text at this point, from now on his name will be included without brackets whenever he is about to be cited.

Response: What is the difference?

Objection: There is a difference because something that arises after ceasing does not exist, for there is no tree that has ceased elsewhere but then arises here.

Response: In this regard, since [a sprout] arises after the seed ceases, it only arises due to [the seed] ceasing earlier.

Objection: This is not similar. Why? Because when one has ceased, another arises. [41] Thus, when the seed has ceased, the sprout arises. But since the sprout does not arise when the sprout has ceased, it is not similar.

Response: That is entirely similar. Why? Because both birth and death are also like this, and the one who dies is not the one who is born. If the very one who dies were the one who is born, then it follows that person would be permanent, and one who is a god would only become a god and one who is an animal would only become an animal. But one should not assert this, since rebirth and reincarnation produced by karma and affliction are unmistaken. Thus you cannot assert, "Just the one who dies is the one who is born," and this is entirely similar.

Also, here it is illogical to state, "Just the one that ceases is the one that arises." If both the seed and sprout were absolutely unrelated, the two would not exist as cause and effect even nominally. But since they nominally exist [as cause and effect], those two are not absolutely unrelated.

Again, in this [world] someone may say, "I planted the seed and I grew this tree," "I produced a son," "This tree is mine," and "This son is mine." But if the seed and tree, and [the father] and son, were absolutely unrelated, such worldly expressions would be impossible. But since such [expressions] are possible, it cannot be stated that both the seed and tree are absolutely unrelated. Nāgārjuna states below:

> That which is different, is different in dependence on others.
> If others do not exist, others would not be different from it.
> It is untenable that something
> Dependent on another, is different from it. (14:5)

Objection: Again on this point, if the seed exists, it will come to cease, since if it did not exist, it would not come to [cease]. Therefore here arising is earlier and cessation later.

Response: Even in this case regarding the seed, the prior cessation of the seed exists. Why? Because the tree is not something other than the sprout [42] and also the seed is not something other than the tree; therefore the sprout arises from the prior cessation of the seed, and even the seed itself arises from the prior cessation of the seed. Thus Master Āryadeva said:[43]

> Just as the end of a seed is seen
> Though it does not have a beginning
> So too birth does not arise
> When its causes are incomplete. (viii:25)

Therefore, since neither arising or ceasing can be posited as earlier or later, why is it inappropriate to criticize the statement "Cessation is negated first, arising is negated later"? Because it is clearly taught that those two cannot be posited as earlier or later, you should investigate why Master [Nāgārjuna] here states cessation first and arising later.

43. CŚ, viii:25. TCE (p. 42): *sa bon dpe ni ji ltar bar, de la thog ma yod ma yin, de ltar rgyu dang mi ldan las, skye ba'ang srid par mi 'gyur ro*. Derge (D 3846: 10a4): *ji ltar sa bon mtha' mthong zhing, de la thog ma yod min ltar, de bzhin rgyu ni ma tshang phyir, skye ba'ang 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro*.

1. Critique of Conditions

[Abhidharmikas[44]] object: First demonstrate how the term "arising" is a mere convention.[45]

Response: We shall now set this out fully. Nāgārjuna explains:

> Not from itself, not from another,
> Not from both, nor without a cause,
> Never, in any way,
> Do any things arise. (1:1)

In this regard, if some thing were to arise, that thing would arise from itself, or from another, or from both itself and another, or without a cause.[46] But if we examine these [alternatives], none are tenable. Why? The term "from itself" ultimately means "from its own self."[47] First, a thing does not arise from its own self because such arising would be pointless, moreover such arising would be endless. As such, things that exist in and of themselves [43] do not need to arise again. But if something that [already] exists [needs to] arise again, then it would never not need to arise. But this is untenable.

Therefore, first, things do not arise from themselves. Also, they do not arise from others. Why? Because in consequence everything would arise from everything. They do not arise from both themselves and others,

44. The term "Abhidharmikas" here and in the remainder of the text refers to Vaibhāṣhika and Sautrāntika followers of Lower Abhidharma (*mngon pa 'og ma*).

45. Convention (*tha snyad*, *vyavahāra*).

46. This tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*) that denies arising in four ways asserts that the arising of a thing is (1) not from itself (*bdag las min*, *na svato*), (2) not from another (*gzhan las min*, *na parato*), (3) not from both (*gnyis las min*, *na dvābhyāṃ*), and (4) not without a cause (*rgyu med min*, *nāhetuta*).

47. From its own self (*bdag nyid las*, *ātmana*).

because in consequence both [previous] errors would apply. Also they do not arise without a cause because in consequence everything would continuously arise from everything and all endeavor would be pointless. Thus because it is not tenable that a thing arises in any of these ways, the term "arising" is merely a convention, since there is no arising.

Objection: We admit the first three points: (1) Things do not arise from themselves, so how then could a sprout arise from itself? (2) If they do not arise from themselves, it is illogical that they arise from both themselves and others, since one part [of the thesis] would fail. (3) And the proposition "arising without a cause" cannot be accepted since it is absurd.

But since you strictly maintain the position that "Things never arise from others," what explanation could justify this?

> The four conditions are: causal condition,
> Objective condition, antecedent condition,
> And the dominant condition.
> A fifth condition does not exist. (1:2)

Since it is said that "A fifth does not exist," this indicates that [Abhidharma] masters strictly maintain that any condition—even those conventionally described as different from the four conditions—must be included within the four conditions. [44] In order to fully settle the issue, these masters teach the four conditions, such as the causal condition, to be the conditions generating things, for things arise from these four conditions [alone]. Thus, because things arise from these four conditions which are "other," therefore it is unsound to assert "Things never arise from others."

Response: If you designate any of the four conditions, such as the causal condition, as "other," and if they were something other than things [they produce], then things would arise from others. But it is untenable to say they are "other." In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> The intrinsic reality of things
> Does not exist in their conditions and so on.
> If their own intrinsic reality does not exist
> Extrinsic reality does not exist. (1:3)

Here, existent things may be described as "other" since one [thing] relies on another, just as, for example, Gupta is other than Caitra and Caitra is other than Gupta. But whenever conditions such as seeds exist, then at that time things such as sprouts [grown from them] do not exist. Thus when conditions such as causal conditions and so on exist, then the intrinsic reality of things such as sprouts does not exist. If their own intrinsic reality does not exist, then how could [their] causal [conditions] and so on be other [than those things]? Hence it is untenable that conditions, such as causal conditions, are [extrinsically] other than things such as sprouts. Therefore because extrinsic reality definitely does not exist, it is [45] untenable to say "Things arise from others." "And so on" is stated in "conditions and so on . . ." (1:3b) in order to include the doctrines of others. As such, it is clearly taught that the arising of things is untenable, even with respect to the doctrines of others.

Objection: Doesn't consciousness arise when conditions such as material form and so on are present?

Response: That is not so. Let's investigate the arising of things. If you assert that consciousness that has not arisen arises from conditions that are other [than it], then how could consciousness that has not yet arisen possess its own intrinsic reality? And if its own intrinsic reality does not exist, how could extrinsic reality exist? And if extrinsic reality does not exist, then sprouts and so on would similarly [be nonexistent].

Again, there is an alternate meaning. The essential nature of things[48] does not exist in their conditions, it does not exist in those that are other than their conditions, also it does not exist in both. Why? Because to take them as conditions for the arising [of another] is flawed, for it is pointless. Thus, if the intrinsic reality of things existed in their conditions, or in those other than their conditions, or in both, then what use is there for things that already exist to arise? It would be pointless to consider that things that exist due to their intrinsic reality need to arise again. What use are conditions for something that [already] exists? Also, considering them to be conditions would be pointless. That being so, Nāgārjuna said:

48. TCE (p. 45): "The essential nature of things" (*dngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin*). This is synonymous with "the intrinsic reality of things" (*dngos po rnams kyi ngo bo nyid*).

The intrinsic reality of things
Does not exist in their conditions and so on. (1:3ab)

Therefore, that which does not exist in its conditions and so on does not have its own intrinsic reality because it can never be considered apart from them. Nāgārjuna [also] said:

If their own intrinsic reality does not exist
Extrinsic reality does not exist. (1:3cd) [46]

Therefore if extrinsic reality does not exist, who can say that things arise from extrinsic reality?

Objection: What use is it for you to ask, "What things arise from themselves, or others, and so on?" for the eyes (*cakṣu*) and so forth are conditions that act to generate consciousness. In what way? Here the act of arising is [the act of] generating, giving rise to, and producing, that primarily establishes[49] consciousness. Consciousness [is something that] arises. The eyes and so on accomplish the act of giving rise to consciousness. They are conditions because they establish something. For example, the act of cooking involves cooking and the cook, which are things that primarily establish rice gruel. Rice gruel is something that is cooked, and the person, the vessels, water, fire, stoves, and so on perform their own [specific] functions. They are seen as conditions that accomplish the act of cooking.

In response, Nāgārjuna explains:

An action does not possess conditions (1:4a)

You may say that because the eyes and so on accomplish the action of giving rise to consciousness, they are conditions of consciousness and they also give their name to consciousness. But if we investigate such action, then this is untenable, for how could the eyes and so on establish [consciousness]? Why [is this untenable]? Because we may ask whether, in your explanation, the action of giving rise [to consciousness] establishes (1) consciousness that has [already] arisen or (2) consciousness that has not [yet] arisen?

49. Establishes, engages, or accomplishes (*'jug pa*, *niṣpādaka*).

First, it does not establish [consciousness] that has not [yet] arisen because that is impossible. Thus "the action of arising" establishes an existing consciousness, and it does not establish that which does not exist, for consciousness that has not arisen does not exist. If it does not exist, then how could the action of giving rise [to consciousness] be something that exists?

It does not establish the action of giving rise to consciousness [47] that has already arisen. Why? Because that consciousness has already arisen, and that which has already arisen does not [need to] arise again.

But if you think that the action of giving rise [to consciousness] exists for consciousness now arising, then that also is not plausible. Why? Because not only does arisen and unarisen [consciousness] not exist, but that now arising does not exist. Since it has already been demonstrated that the action of arising does not establish either that which has arisen or not arisen, therefore the action of arising does not exist. This [reasoning] also refutes the act of cooking. Thus an action that possesses conditions is not tenable.

But if you think an action that does not possess conditions exists, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> There is no action that lacks conditions. (1:4b)

In fact there is no action that lacks conditions, for if [such action] were to exist, then everything would continuously arise from everything. If that were so, all endeavor would be pointless, hence [your assertion] cannot be accepted. Because of this, an action that does not possess conditions is untenable.

Objection: At times conditions exist, and due to their presence, things are established. Since they are established, arising is established.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which lacks action is not a condition. (1:4c)

Anything that lacks action is not a condition. How? If the eyes and so on are asserted to be conditions of consciousness since they accomplish the act of giving rise [to consciousness], then it has already been clearly demonstrated that the act of giving rise [to consciousness] is untenable. If

something does not exist, how could that which establishes it exist? Because the agent that establishes [consciousness] does not exist, the eyes and so on are not conditions that act to give rise [to consciousness]. If they are not conditions that act to give rise to something, how could they be conditions? But if they were, then everything [48] would be a condition of everything. If that were so, then everything would arise from everything. But that cannot be because those which lack action are not conditions.

Objection: Why should I say that conditions do not possess action? Actually conditions definitely possess action!

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Yet they do not possess action. (1:4d)

This is applied in the context of stating "not" (1:4c), for conditions do not possess action. Now it has already been clearly demonstrated that:

> An action does not possess conditions (1:4a)

and:

> There is no action that lacks conditions. (1:4b)

But if they lack action, how could conditions come to possess action? Thus because conditions that do not possess action are untenable, and since [conditions] that possess action also do not exist, therefore considering them to be conditions is pointless.

Objection: What use is it to reflect on what conditions do or do not possess action because in every case things arise in dependence on [any of] the four conditions, such as the causal [condition]. Therefore they constitute the conditions of things.

Response: Why do you wave your fist in the air? We previously demonstrated that the act of arising does not exist in the least; therefore conditions cannot be tenable because they do not exist. How then could it be tenable

to state, "Things arise in dependence on those [conditions]"? Moreover Nāgārjuna explains:

> If they are called "conditions" because
> [Things] arise in dependence on them,
> Then for as long as [things] do not arise [49]
> For that long why aren't they nonconditions? (1:5)

If you say that they are called "conditions" because [things] arise in dependence on them, then for as long as [things] do not arise [from them], for that long why not conceive they are nonconditions?

But if you think that they were not conditions before but became conditions later, then that also is untenable. Why? Because in consequence, they would become the conditions of everything, but this also is unacceptable.

And if you think that even those states that are not conditions become conditions in reliance on some other state—and therefore it does not follow that everything becomes the condition of everything—then just this error again applies. When a noncondition becomes a condition due to something relying on it, then just that condition would also come to have conditions, and you must then admit that even those [conditions] would have [conditions]. Thus the error of infinite regress would apply.

Again if something became a condition in reliance on other states—then since that which relies on other states would itself rely on other states—there would be an infinite regress, and that cannot be accepted. Therefore conditions are utterly untenable. Moreover:

> Conditions are not tenable
> For either a nonexistent or an existent object.
> If it is nonexistent, what would they be conditions of?
> If it is existent, what would conditions do? (1:6)

If you say that the relationship expressed by the words "That arises in dependence on this" indicates this is a condition of that object, then the relationship delineated by the words "this" and "that" should be considered to be either the condition of an existent or nonexistent object. However, it is not tenable that something can be called a condition of a nonexistent or an existent object. In what way? [50]

If it is nonexistent, what would they be conditions of?
If it is existent, what would conditions do? (1:6cd)

If we examine the conditions of a nonthing,[50] then how would you respond to the question, "What would they be conditions of"? In fact, it is illogical to say, "Thread is a condition of a nonexistent cloth."

Objection: Since cloth arises from thread that is its cause, it is appropriate to say that causal thread is a condition of cloth due to [the cloth] arising after [the thread].

Response: Do you wish to entice the mother of your unborn son with your unborn son's wealth? We have said that the conditions of a nonthing are untenable, and we have denied that a thing arises, since conditions are not tenable. But you assert that conditions are established since a future thing arises. However, a thing does not arise at any time, or in any place, even intermittently, for Nāgārjuna said:

If it is nonexistent, what would they be conditions of? (1:6c)

For you, when [a condition] endures, then a thing will later arise. And through [another] relying on it, it is established as a condition. But how could this be? Therefore this is flawed [logic].

But if you think that something is a condition of an existent [thing], then Nāgārjuna said:

If it is existent, what would conditions do? (1:6d)

Conditions are untenable for an existent thing, for if already existent, what would conditions do? It is illogical to declare, "Causal thread is a condition of cloth that is already established and existent."

50. Nonthing (*dngos med, abhāva*) in general refers to a phenomenon that is empty of function (*don byed nus stong*) or incapable of function (*don byed mi nus*), such as permanent space, emptiness, nirvana, the nonexistence of a thing, and so on. It may also refer to that which is not established by its characteristics (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis ma grub*) or lacks intrinsic reality (*ngo bo nyid kyis ma grub*).

Objection: I do not say, "The action of a condition exists for that which has [already] arisen," but causal thread is a condition of cloth, since thread that is its cause is designated as a condition of cloth that already exists.

Response: Do you think that before you take a wife, your son's wife already exists? The arising of a thing has been refuted since it is untenable that a thing arises, yet still you wish to demonstrate a condition that has generated cloth.

Objection: But for the purpose of establishing that a thing arises, it is tenable to say that one first spins [thread] and that later this was a condition of that [cloth].

Response: But this also is flawed [logic].

Objection: Things are established from their characteristics. [51] And the statement "A cause is that which establishes [its effect]" reveals the characteristics of a cause. Therefore, causes that possess characteristics exist.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Since a phenomenon is not established
> As existent, nonexistent, or [both] existent and nonexistent,
> How could it have an "establishing cause"?
> If that was so, it would be illogical. (1:7)

If one were to ask whether a phenomenon that is established by its causes is established as (1) existent, (2) nonexistent, or (3) [both] existent and nonexistent, then this is not at all tenable.[51]

First, that which exists does not need to be established because it has already arisen. Why should that which has already arisen arise again? If something that already exists [needs to] arise again, it would never not need to arise, but this is unacceptable. Also, teaching something to be its cause is untenable, for if [the effect] exists, what would a cause do? Thus that which now [already] exists does not [need] to be established.

51. A phenomenon (*chos, dharma*) is not established as existent (*yod pa ma yin, na sat*), nonexistent (*med pa ma yin, nāsat*), nor existent and nonexistent (*yod med min, na sadasat*).

[Second], that which now does not yet exist also cannot be established because it does not exist. If, though nonexistent, it arose, then even the horns of a rabbit would arise.

[Objection:] But doesn't a thing arise from a cause?

[Response:] This is incorrect because causes are not tenable. If things are nonexistent, then what would act as the cause of what? Again, what would be the point of a cause of the cause? Thus, if things do not exist in any respect, how could an instruction differentiating "This is a cause of that" and "This is not a cause of that" exist? Thus those which are nonexistent also are not established.

[Third], they do not establish existence and nonexistence because it would be contradictory for both existent and nonexistent states to arise together, and it follows that the former errors would obtain. Thus, [causes] do not establish existence or nonexistence.

Therefore, when analyzed in this way, it is untenable that anything is established by any means. [52] At that time:

> How could it have an "establishing cause"?
> If that was so, it would be illogical. (1:7cd)

If that was so, then how could there be an establishing cause,[52] for it would be illogical.

[Objective condition]

Objection: Objects exist because they are the object-field of consciousness and so on.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> You clearly state that an existent phenomenon
> That solely lacks an object [possesses an object]. (1:8ab)

52. Establishing cause (*sgrub byed rgyu, nirvatakahetu*) refers to the causal condition (*rgyu rkyen, hetupratyaya*).

Here one must add the term "possesses objects,"[53] for you clearly say that an existent phenomenon[54] that solely lack an object "possesses an object." In your opinion an existent phenomenon possesses an object, as distinct from lacking an object. In what way? Here the term "possesses an object" ultimately means "having an object," and an existent phenomenon possesses an object and a nonexistent phenomenon does not. But since [an existent phenomenon] has no object prior to possessing an object, it has no object. Just as, for example, one who has wealth is one who possesses wealth, and he is called "wealthy." If such a person exists, he possesses wealth, but if not, he does not. However, since he has no wealth prior to possessing wealth, he has no wealth.

Therefore if in your opinion an existent phenomenon that definitely has no object possesses an object, then Nāgārjuna says:

> Thus if a phenomenon does not have an object
> How could [its] object exist? (1:8cd)

The term "thus" (*atha*) indicates the inquiry and "how could" (*kuta*) delineates the proof. [53] Thus if it is proven that [an existent] phenomenon does not have an object,[55] why do you conceive of an object that lacks objective existence?

Objection: You wrongly conceive this through not understanding our textual system. I do not say that which has an object possesses an object, like possessing wealth. What this means is that [mental] phenomena are established by a basis, and that is their object. Therefore this clearly demonstrates that they possess an object.

Response: That is untenable, and the same response again applies to it. Nāgārjuna said:

> Thus if a phenomenon does not have an object,
> How could [its] object exist? (1:8cd)

53. That which possesses objects (*dmigs pa dang bcas pa, sārambaṇa*) here refers to consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*).
54. Existent phenomena (*yin pa'i chos, saddharma*) also refers to consciousness.
55. That which does not have an object (*dmigs pa med pa, anālambaṇa*).

Thus if [a mental] phenomenon does not have an object, it does not exist, and it is not established—how could it be tenable that its object exists? Also the term "object of [a mental] phenomenon" would never be actually established. How could that which is not actually established, and therefore nonexistent, be an existent object? If its object does not exist, how could [mental] phenomena be established by an object? Therefore an object does not exist and also [a mental] phenomenon never possesses an object.

[Antecedent condition]

Objection: A phenomenon that has just ceased is the condition for the arising of another phenomenon. It is called the "antecedent condition," and it exists.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If phenomena have not arisen,
> [Their] cessation is not tenable.
> Thus the antecedent [condition] is illogical.
> If it has ceased, also how could it be a condition? (1:9)

The last two lines of the root verse should be reversed:

> If it has ceased, how could it be a condition?
> Thus the antecedent [condition] is illogical.

The term "also"[56] should be viewed in this context [54] as referring to "not arisen." Further, in reference to the term "not arisen," this should be applied to:

> If it has ceased, also how could it be a condition? (1:9d)

so that it reads:

56. TCE (p. 53) states "the term . . ." (*zhe bya ba'i sgra*) without naming the term. Here I follow the Peking version (p. 53, note 5), which states "the term 'also'" (*kyang zhes bya ba'i sgra*) and names the term. This refers to "also" (*yang*) in the fourth line of the root text.

How could it also be a condition of that which is unarisen?

Because these two lines were versified, they should not necessarily be read in that order.

It is not tenable to state, "The immediately preceding cessation of one thing is the condition for the arising of another thing." Why? Because Nāgārjuna said:

If phenomena have not arisen,
[Their] cessation is not tenable. (1:9ab)
If it has ceased, also how could it be a condition? (1:9d)

"Cessation" means nonexistence. If the seed were to cease prior to the arising of a sprout, and if the seed was nonexistent since it had ceased, then how could [that seed] be something that generates a sprout and be a condition of it? Moreover, what is the condition for the seed ceasing? How could a seed that has ceased and is nonexistent act as a condition that gives rise to a sprout? How could a seed that has ceased be a condition of a sprout that has not yet arisen? That being so, if you conceive that a sprout arises after the seed has ceased, in consequence both [states] would be causeless. But being causeless is not acceptable.

Objection: If the seed were to cease immediately before the sprout arose, then it would be established as the antecedent condition because immediately before the sprout arises it acts as the condition for the seed ceasing.

Response: That is also untenable. Why? Even if it arose, how would it act as a condition? If the sprout arose, and if the seed ceased at the completion of the act of giving rise to the sprout, then what would be the condition for it to cease? Also, how would it be a condition for giving rise to the sprout? Therefore, as before, it follows that both would be causeless.

But if you think that the sprout arises at the time the seed ceases and therefore the error of being causeless does not arise, then this also is illogical. Why? [55] Both that which ceases and that which arises do not exist because [the seed] does not cease and [the sprout] has already arisen. If both things exist how would [the seed] be an antecedent condition? If

you think that both arising and ceasing are simultaneous, then [a seed] immediately preceding [the sprout] would be untenable because they would be concurrent. Therefore the antecedent [condition] is illogical. Thus because the antecedent [condition] is untenable when analyzed from any perspective, it is untenable to state, "The antecedent condition exists."

Again, there is an alternate meaning. It has already been established that "Things are unarisen," therefore it is established that the arising of things does not exist, for Nāgārjuna said:

> If phenomena have not arisen,
> [Their] cessation is not tenable (1:9ab).

If things have not arisen and are nonexistent, their cessation is not tenable. How could nonexistent [things] come to cease?

> Thus the antecedent [condition] is illogical. (1:9c)

Therefore, because the cessation of things is not tenable, thus the antecedent [condition] is illogical.

But even when you consider that which has ceased, it cannot be an antecedent [condition]. How?

> If it has ceased, also how could it be a condition? (1:9d).

Also regarding that which has arisen, how could it become a condition? The meaning of this has been explained previously.

[Dominant condition]

Objection: The dominant [condition] exists. A dominant thing is a dominant condition. Further, in brief, whatever exists and arises, and whatever neither exists nor arises, is a dominant [condition].

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Because things devoid of
> Intrinsic reality do not exist,

To say "If this exists
That arises" is not tenable. (1:10) [56]

In this context it was previously declared and later extensively demonstrated that things are devoid of intrinsic reality.[57] Therefore, having clearly established this, [Nāgārjuna] spoke of "Things devoid of intrinsic reality. . . ." (1:10ab)

But because a thing described as "existing due to being devoid of intrinsic reality" cannot be an existent thing, therefore a thing cannot be described in terms of "If this exists, that arises." If something is described by the words "if this exists" does not exist, how could something described by the words "that arises" be tenable? Since something described as "this" in the statement "If this exists, that arises" is not tenable, then what would arise as the dominant [condition] of what? Therefore, a dominant [condition] is untenable.

Objection: Indeed I cannot say, "Things that are conditions are established in this way," but conditions do exist. Why? Because effects arise from them, and in this [world] we see effects such as sprouts arising from conditions such as seeds and so on. Therefore, through seeing that effects arise from [conditions], we understand that they are the conditions of an effect.

Nāgārjuna responds:

The effect in fact does not exist in
Those individual or assembled conditions.
How could something that does not exist
In those conditions arise from them? (1:11)

The term "in fact" means "ever."[58] As such, [the effect] never exists in its individual [conditions]; also it never exists in its assembled [conditions]. If it is untenable for you to demonstrate in any way that effects arise because

57. TCE (p. 55) states *dngos po rang bzhin med rnam kyi, yod pa gang phyir yod min na.* MK(S) states *bhāvānāṁ niḥsvabhāvānāṁ na satta vidyate yataḥ* (see Siderits and Katsura 2013, 26). Thus the Sanskrit term *svabhāva* has been translated into Tibetan in BP as *ngo bo nyid* and *rang bzhin*. As such, "devoid of intrinsic reality" or "devoid of essential nature" (*rang bzhin med pa nyid, niḥsvabhāva*) should be seen as synonyms.

58. The term "in fact" (*nyid, ca*) means "ever" (*kho ba, eva*), which when combined with a term of negation means "never."

their conditions are fully established, then how could conditions be established? [57] In what way? Because the effect does not exist at all in those individual or assembled conditions. How could something that does not exist in those individual and assembled conditions arise from them? If the effect does not arise, how could you [assert] its conditions are established?

But if you think that effects only exist in those conditions, then even in that case conditions are untenable, for conditions do not act on [effects] that exist because there is no need to generate what has already arisen.

Furthermore, if the effect exists in those conditions, does the effect of multiple conditions exist as a final complete state in each condition, or does one part exist in each? First, if [the effect] is considered to exist as a final complete state in each [condition], then they would not become multiple conditions. Also, because [the effect] would exist in each [condition], then it follows that the effect would arise from each without reliance [on other conditions]. However, if one imagines that part of the effect exists in the conditions, then it follows that part of the effect would arise from each [condition] without reliance [on other conditions], and this is unacceptable. Because of that, it is untenable that an effect exists in its conditions either individually or when assembled.

Yet if you think that though the effect does not exist in its conditions, still it arises from its conditions and its conditions are fully established in reliance on their effect arising, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> But if it arises from those conditions
> When they do not exist,
> Then why does it not also arise
> From nonconditions? (1:12)

If something is specified as either a condition or noncondition due to having an effect [or not], then also [58] that effect would not exist in its conditions or nonconditions. If the effect arises when those [conditions] do not exist, then why does it not also arise from nonconditions? Thus the effect is similar in not existing in its conditions or nonconditions, and it remains just your predilection that "An effect arises from conditions but does not arise from nonconditions." Therefore the arising of effects is untenable. And if the arising of the effect does not exist, how could its conditions be established?

Objection: With regard to conditions, I do not say that the effect arises from existent and nonexistent conditions. I do say that effects constitute conditions, where conditions themselves arise from conditions. Thus cloth arises from causal thread itself, since thread that is its cause is the condition of cloth.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If effects constitute conditions
> And conditions are not derived from themselves,
> How could effects not derived
> From themselves be derived from conditions? (1:13)

If you imagine that effects constitute conditions and they are not derived from conditions themselves, then conditions do not constitute themselves, they are not self-established, they do not consist of themselves, and they are not derived from themselves because they lack an intrinsic reality. If you imagine that effects arise from conditions that do not emerge from themselves, are not self-established, do not consist of themselves, are not derived from themselves, and lack an intrinsic reality, then you should fully investigate how could they be derived from conditions. Thus if thread that is the cause [of cloth] were self-established, it would [59] also be derived from itself, and to say cloth is derived from thread that is its cause would not be tenable. When causes are not self-established, not derived from themselves, and lack an intrinsic reality—and [cloth] emerges from such causes and arises from just that cause itself—at that time how could it be tenable to state, "Cloth is derived from thread that is its cause"? Āryadeva says:[59]

> If cloth is established from its causes
> And its causes also are established from others
> How could something not established from itself,
> By itself produce something other? (xiv:13)

59. CŚ, xiv:13. TCE (p. 59): *snam bu rgyu las grub yin na, rgyu yang gzhan las grub pa yin, gang la rang las grub med pa, de yis gzhan ni ji ltar bskyed.* Derge (D 3846: 15b5): *bum pa rgyu las grub 'gyur zhing, rgyu ni gzhan las grub 'gyur na, gang la rang las grub med pa, de yis gzhan po ji ltar skyed.*

Thus due to the reason that conditions are not self-established, they are not derived from themselves and they lack an intrinsic reality; therefore conditions do not arise, and effects do not arise from conditions.

But in reflecting on this, if you think that effects arise from nonconditions, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> Therefore an effect derived from
> Conditions or nonconditions
> Does not exist.[60] (1:14abc)

If it is untenable that cloth is derived from thread that is its cause, then to state "Cloth is derived from grass" would contradict the [view of the] world. How could this be tenable? Therefore an effect derived from nonconditions does not exist.

Objection: Conditions surely exist. Why? Because there are definitely [either] conditions or nonconditions. Seeing that there are definitely [only] conditions or nonconditions, [therefore] grain oil is only derived from grain, butter is not. Butter is derived from cream alone; grain oil is not. And neither is derived from sand. Thus because it is said "These are conditions of those. Those are not conditions of these"; therefore [60] conditions are established.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If an effect does not exist
> How could it have conditions or nonconditions? (1:14cd)

You say that effects such as grain oil arising and not arising definitely [establishes the existence of] conditions and nonconditions. But it was previously demonstrated that the arising of effects is untenable. If an effect does not exist, then how could it be tenable to say "These are not its conditions,

60. TCE (p. 59): *de phyir rkyen gyi rang bzhin min, rkyen min las byung 'bras bu ni, yod min*. . . . The editors add the note (p. 59 note 10): "Since this line within the root commentary is unclear, it must be examined." With this in mind, I have modified the translation to accord with MK(S): *tasmān na pratyayamayaṁ nāpratyayamayaṁ phalam* (see Siderits and Katsura 2013, 28).

these are its conditions"? If these two [possibilities] were to arise in reliance on the effect, then even that effect would be nonexistent. Since they have no effect, how could nonconditions be conditions? Thus since their effect is not tenable, conditions and nonconditions do not exist. Since effects, conditions, and nonconditions do not exist, the term "arising" is established as a mere convention.

This is the first chapter, called Critique of Conditions.

2. *Critique of Going and Coming*

[Abhidharmikas] observe: Through your clear presentation of the logic of nonarising, our minds experience heartfelt amazement to hear about emptiness. But how could the world's perception of going and coming be untenable?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Just as there is no going where one has gone,
> Neither is there going where one has not gone. (2:1ab) [61]

If going exists, one may ask whether it exists where one has gone or where one has not gone. But just as there is no going where one has gone because the act of going is already past, neither is there going where one has not gone because the act of going has not yet begun.

Objection: It is just so, indeed going does not exist where one has already gone and where one has not yet gone. However, going exists on that being gone over.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Apart from where one has gone and not gone,
> That being gone over is unintelligible. (2:1cd)

Apart from where one has gone and where one has not gone, how can that being gone over exist? This is unintelligible.[61] How? Stating "This is

61. Unintelligible (*shes par mi 'gyur, na gamyate*), following the Indian-Tibetan translation

unintelligible" is tantamount to stating "It is untenable since it is not apprehended." Thus apart from where one has gone and where one has not gone, "that being gone over" is not apprehended at all and thus it is untenable. Since [that being gone over] does not exist in the least, therefore going does not exist.

Objection: It exists just on that being gone over because going exists there. How?

> Where there is movement, there is going.
> Further, one's movement exists on that being gone over,
> Not where one has gone nor not gone.
> Thus going exists on that being gone over. (2:2)

In your proof [establishing] the nonexistence of going, you declared [in verse one] that the act of going is already past or not yet begun; therefore I say to that, "Where there is movement, there is going." Further, one's movement exists on that being gone over, for that movement is observed.

"One's"[62] is a term that strictly refers to [62] "of the one [or agent] who goes." Thus, because movement does not exist where one has gone nor where one has not gone, therefore it exists on that being gone over. Where there is movement, going exists. Thus going exists on that being gone over since going exists in just that way.

In response Nāgārjuna says:

> How could it be tenable that there is
> Going on that being gone over?
> When there is no going
> That being gone over is not tenable. (2:3)

Here you say going exists on that [being gone over] for you assert that which possesses going [goes] on that being gone over. But the act of going constitutes a single [action], and since [for you] the act of going applies to

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team's use of the secondary meaning of the verb *gam-*, "to know," as substantiated by the commentary.

62. "One's" (*gang gi, yataḥ*) here refers to "the going of one who goes" (*'gro ba po, gantuḥ*).

"that being gone over," therefore it follows there is no going when "going" is devoid of "the act of going."

But this also is untenable, for how could there be such going when going does not exist? Thus when "going" is devoid of the act of going, "going" is untenable. Therefore, at that time, how could going on that being gone over be tenable?

He gives a further response:

> Whoever holds there is going on that being gone over,
> For him it follows there is no going
> On that being gone over,
> Because that being gone over is discerned [thus]. (2:4)

With the thought that it is unacceptable that such faults arise, you may therefore say that the "going" that possesses going, and also the "going" that is the thought to go, apply to going. [63] But it follows that being gone over does not possess going and is devoid of going, just like a town or a city [are devoid of going]. Thus, for example, just as it follows "going to town" has this error, so too that being gone over also has this error, and this therefore is unacceptable. As such, no matter how the statement "There is going on that being gone over" [is construed], it is untenable.

But if you agree that such a fault arises, and instead theorize that both "going" and "that being gone over" refer to that which possesses going, then [the following] error arises, for Nāgārjuna explains:

> If there is going on that being gone over
> It follows that going would be twofold:
> [The going] of one [who goes] on that being gone over
> And any going on it. (2:5)

If you imagine there is going on that being gone over, it follows that "going" would be twofold, for it would be held as (1) the going of one who possesses [going] on that being gone over and (2) the going called "going on it." But since such going cannot be asserted to be twofold, therefore this also is untenable. There is still another fault, as Nāgārjuna explains:

> If it follows that going is twofold
> Then the goer also would be twofold.

Why? Because going is not tenable
When there is no goer. (2:6)

If it follows that going is twofold, then it follows that the goer also would be twofold. Why?

Because going is not tenable
When there is no goer. (2:6cd)

Because if the goer [64] exists, going also exists, and if the goer is refuted, then going does not exist, therefore it follows that if going is twofold, the goer in consequence would also be twofold. But this also is unacceptable.

Therefore, since many faults would arise, there is no going on that being gone over. Because it is untenable to go where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over, therefore going surely does not exist.

Objection: Though it is untenable to go where one has gone, where one has not gone, or on that being gone over, still going that is dependent on the goer exists because such going is observed in relation to the goer.

In response Nāgārjuna states:

If there were no goer
Going would not be tenable. (2:7ab)

It has already been demonstrated that if there were no goer, going would not be tenable. But if going were not tenable since there was no goer, what going would depend on the goer and what going would pertain to the goer?

Objection: I do not say that there is another going that pertains to the goer that is distinct from that goer. I do say those who possess going are called "goers," and they exist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

If there is no going
How could there be a goer? (2:7cd)

If going without any basis [or agent] were actually established, then would that [going] possess a goer or nongoer? But going that lacks a basis [i.e., a goer] that is distinct from it does not exist in the least. Therefore if there is no going that is established as distinct [from the goer], how for you could that which possesses going come to be a goer? Also if a goer does not exist, then whose going is it? [65] Therefore going does not exist.

Objection: What use is this speculation? Going is that which is described in the statement "Going relies on where one goes."

Response: If the goer were actually established, then wouldn't going also be actually established? But since [the goer] is not actually established, how could going be actually established? In what way? If going exists, then the goer or nongoer goes. Nāgārjuna explains:

> First the goer does not go
> And the nongoer does not go.
> What third [person] other than
> The goer and the nongoer, goes? (2:8)

Therefore "[the goer] goes" is not established. Why? Because it is untenable. How?

> First, how could it be tenable
> To say "the goer goes"?
> When going does not exist,
> The goer is not tenable at all. (2:9)

When it is said "the goer goes," just a single act of going exists. Since that [act of going] clearly applies to "goes," the goer is devoid of going. It follows that ["goer"] would constitute a mere name just like [the names] Gupta and Caitra, but also this is unacceptable. Therefore, when going does not exist, the goer is not tenable at all. At that time, [66] how could it be tenable to say "the goer goes"?

Nāgārjuna gives a further response:

For any who take the position that
The goer goes, it follows
He is a goer without going
Because you assert the goer goes. (2:10)

You may think it is unsuitable for any to take this position, for such a fault would arise, and you may think the goer goes, since he possesses going. But since the term "goer" clearly applies to the act of going, it follows he is a goer without going. And because [you] assert the goer goes, then it follows that this would mean he "goes without going." But this is untenable, for how could one who "goes" be without going?

But if you think it is unsuitable that such a fault arises, yet assert that both "the goer" and "goes" possess going, then also this error arises. Nāgārjuna explains:

If the goer goes
It follows that going would be twofold:
That by which he actually becomes a goer
And that which goes having become a goer. (2:11)

If one imagines the goer who possesses going goes, then it follows that going would be twofold: (1) the going by which he actually becomes a goer when he possesses it, and (2) that going in reliance upon which "he goes." But it is untenable that going is twofold. If it followed that going were twofold, [67] then, as before, it would also follow that the goer would be twofold. But since that is also unacceptable, it is thus untenable to say "the goer goes."

Furthermore, the nongoer also does not go. When it is said that "the goer goes" is untenable, how then could it be tenable to say, "The nongoer who is devoid of going goes!" That being so, the nongoer also does not go.

But if you think that both the goer and the nongoer go, then it was said:

What third [person], other than
The goer and the nongoer, goes? (2:8cd).

Therefore, how could it be tenable that a third [person] that is other than the goer, the nongoer, or the goer and the nongoer goes? That being

so, because [such a person] is utterly nonexistent, neither the goer nor even the nongoer goes.

Thus because of that, it is untenable to say "the goer, the nongoer, the goer and the nongoer, goes." Therefore to say "he goes" is not actually established. If that referred to in the statement "he goes" does not exist, how could going be actually established?

Objection: Though the statement "The goer, that which is the goer, and that which is not the goer" has been established as untenable, it is tenable to say "he goes," for it is said "Gupta goes" or "Caitra goes."

Response: Your comment explains nothing. In relation to Gupta, haven't we clarified whether Gupta becomes a goer and goes, or does not become a goer and goes, or both becomes a goer and a nongoer and goes? Your comment therefore is pointless.

Objection: Going surely exists. Why? Because the beginning of the act of going exists. Though it has been established that one cannot say "Going exists where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over," when [68] one goes after resting, at that time one begins the act of going immediately after the act of resting. Thus, that being so, going exists since the beginning of the act [of going] exists.

Response: Even though your mind is confused, wouldn't you recognize your own son even if he changed his name? You express the same topic from a new perspective with different words, but any examination of the beginning of the act of going will be the examination of where one has gone, where one has not gone, and that being gone over. Here Nāgārjuna explains this by the very reasoning stated earlier:

> There is no beginning of going where one has gone. (2:12a)

Why is that? Because the act of going has already passed.

> Also there is no beginning of going where one has not yet gone. (2:12b)

Why is that? Because the act of going has not yet begun.

> There is no beginning on that being gone over. (2:12c)

Why? Because that being gone over does not exist, and because it follows going would be twofold, and also goers would be twofold. Thus this response is given:

> Where then does going begin? (2:12d)

As such, there is no beginning of going. If there is no beginning [of going], how could going exist?

Objection: But going surely exists. Why? Because that being gone over, where one has gone, and where one has not gone exist. Therefore because it possesses going, it is called "that being gone over," because going has been completed, it is called "where one has gone," and because the act of going relies on where one has not gone, it is called "where one has not gone." Therefore going exists because that being gone over, where one has gone, [69] and where one has not gone exist!

Response: Are you rising into the sky and walking about? Nāgārjuna explains that at that time:

> Before the beginning of going,
> There is no beginning of going
> On that being gone over or where one has gone. (2:13abc)

At that time, while resting before the beginning of going, there is no beginning of going on that being gone over, or where one has gone as well. If there is no beginning of going, how could there be one who possesses going on that being gone over? If one who possesses going does not exist, how could there be going that has been completed?

Objection: Where one has not yet gone exists, for the beginning of going there exists.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> How could there be going where one has not yet gone? (2:13d)

Here any place where one is resting and not yet moving [demarcates] where one has not yet gone, for one has not begun [to go] there yet. When one moves, then at that time when one [begins to] move there, it is no longer where one has not yet gone. At that time, when it is where one has not yet gone, there is no movement [to go] there. That being so, how could there be a beginning of going where one has not gone? We should examine this as follows:

> When the beginning of going
> Is not observed anywhere,
> How can where one has gone, that being gone over,
> And where one has not gone be imagined? (2:14)

When the beginning of going is [70] not observed anywhere, at that time how can where one has gone, that being gone over, and where one has not gone be imagined?

Objection: First, where one has not gone exists.

Response: Do you grieve because of your unborn son's death? Or do you consider the nonexistence of where one has gone to be where one has not gone? Here, if the opposite of where one has gone is where one has not gone, and if where one has gone does not exist, how could "where one has not gone" exist for you?

Objection: If "where one has gone" does not exist since its opposite does not exist, therefore going is established. Why? Because a state incompatible [with it] exists. Thus resting, which is incompatible with going, exists. Therefore, because that which is incompatible with [resting] exists, going exists!

Response: It may be asked that if resting exists, wouldn't going also exist?

But since resting is untenable, how could going exist? In what way? If resting were to exist, is it the goer or nongoer [who rests]? Nāgārjuna explains:

> First, the goer does not rest
> And the nongoer does not rest.
> How could a third person,
> Other than the goer and the nongoer, rest? (2:15)

Thus resting is surely nonexistent. Why? Because it is untenable. How is that?

> First, how could it be tenable
> To say the goer rests?
> When there is no going [71]
> The goer is never tenable. (2:16)

Since someone becomes a goer by possessing [the act of] going, when there is no going, the goer is not tenable. If the opposite of going is called "resting," then going and resting are incompatible, and these two do not abide together as one. Because of that, how could it be tenable to say the goer rests?

The nongoer also does not rest. Why? Because his going does not exist. If the opposite of going is called resting, then the nongoer would rest because he is devoid of going. But how does he rest? If the resting [of the nongoer] were also considered to be resting, it follows that resting would be twofold. Also it follows that the one resting would be twofold. Therefore, because of that, the nongoer also does not rest.

But if you think that the goer and nongoer rest, then:

> How could a third person,
> Other than the goer and the nongoer, rest? (2:15cd)

What third person, other than the goer and the nongoer can be considered to be resting? Thus, because [a third person] does not exist in the least, so too neither the goer nor the nongoer rest.

Moreover, that which is the opposite of going is called resting. And if [the goer] stops, would he stop on that being gone over, where he has gone, or where he has not gone? In that regard:

The goer does not stop while on that being gone over,
On where he has gone, or where he has not gone. (2:17ab)

[The goer] does not rest while on that being gone over. Why? Something is "that being gone over" because it possesses going, and since the opposite of going is resting, and resting and going are incompatible; [72] therefore it is impossible that these two are the same. Therefore, because of that, first the goer does not rest on that being gone over. Also [the goer] does not rest on where he has gone and where he has not gone. Why? Because [the goer] is devoid of going.

Thus if the opposite of going is resting, and going does not exist where one has gone and not gone, then if going does not exist, how could stopping exist? How could resting exist if the stopping of going did not exist?

That being so, resting does not exist on where one has gone or where one has not gone.

As with going, starting and
Also stopping are similar to going. (2:17cd)

For what reason does the goer not rest? It is because both resting and going are incompatible. Similarly, for what reason does the one resting not go? It is because both resting and going are incompatible. For what reason does the nongoer not rest? It is because it follows that resting would be twofold. Similarly, for what reason does the one not resting also not go? It is because it follows that going would be twofold. For what reason does the goer and the nongoer not rest? It has already been explained, "because it is impossible." Similarly, for what reason does the one resting and the one not resting not go? It is because it is impossible. Thus first the resting of the goer and the going of the one resting are similar.

Now, just as it was said that the beginning of going where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over is untenable, so too the starting of resting is untenable where one has rested, where one has not rested, and where one is resting. Thus the beginning of going and also the starting of resting are similar.

Now, just as it is stated that stopping going is not stopping where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over, so too stopping resting is not going [73] from where one is resting because going does not exist. It is also not going from where one is not resting because going does

not exist. It is also not going from where one is resting because resting and going are not compatible. Thus the stopping of going and the stopping of resting are similar.

Objection: Though it cannot be said that "going, starting, and stopping, exist where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over" or that "the goer, the nongoer, and that other than those exists," still Caitra is called "a goer" due to seeing Caitra walk; therefore for that reason the goer and going exist.

Response: First, this is a confused statement that should not have been uttered. However, if the thought that "Caitra is a goer" arises from seeing [Caitra walk], then when Caitra stops walking, is "stopping walking" and "Caitra" the same or different? Nāgārjuna explains:

> To say that going and the goer
> Are the same is not correct.
> To say that going and the goer
> Are different is not correct. (2:18)

How is that?

> If going is identical
> To the goer
> Then it follows that the agent
> And also the action are the same. (2:19) [74]

If going is identical to the goer, then it follows that the agent and also the action are the same. This is untenable. How could that which is the agent be the action?

But if you think it is unsuitable that such an error arises, for both the agent and action are different, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If you imagine going and
> The goer to be different
> There would be going without a goer
> And a goer without going. (2:20)

If you see the error in both the agent and action being the same and imagine the goer and going to be different, then going that is distinct from the goer would be without a basis and self-established. If going was without a basis and self-established, then the goer also would be devoid of going, not reliant on going, and self-established. But these two [alternatives] are completely untenable. How could there be a goer without going and going without a goer?

Objection: Do you restrain the murderer alone [but not the act of murder]? I do not assert that both the agent and the action are different because they are not established as distinct. Also, I do not assert them to be the same, because [the action] is distinct from the agent. Therefore, because of that, both [the agent and action] are established, even though their being [the same or different] does not exist.

Response: We do not restrain the murderer alone. Would you extend your hands and vigorously move them while exhaling as you swim in the waters of a mirage? Or do you maintain the view [75] that nonexistent states exist except for sameness and difference? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If they are not established as
> The same phenomenon
> Or different phenomena
> How could these two be established? (2:21)

If both the agent and action are not established as the same [phenomenon] or different [phenomena], how could these two be established by something other than those two? Thus they are mere mental fabrications.

Objection: How could this object of mundane worldly perception be suppressed by concealing it? One is a "nongoer" due to being devoid of going, and one is a "goer" through relying on going. That being is the one who goes, and further that being is called a goer.

Response: In desiring a son, would you cohabit with a neuter? Or do you consider a nonexistent goer to be a goer? In this case, if that to be gone to [i.e., the destination] exists, it is suitable to imagine a goer. But even when

a goer is imagined, the destination is untenable, therefore at that time since conceiving this is harmful, what use is it?

But if one asks "How could the destination be untenable?" then it has already been shown that where one has gone, where one has not gone, and that being gone over are unintelligible. But if you think that since he goes in just those ways, he is the goer, then [equally] since he does not go [in those ways], therefore imagining him to be the goer is pointless!

Objection: Since he is a goer, the going itself goes. For example, "speaking speaks" or "action acts."

Response: But if you consider the going of the goer, then what going goes [76] as that goer, or what other than that goes? Neither are tenable. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> That going by which he manifests as a goer
> Is not the going of that goer (2:22ab)

That going when possessed—which is the going by which Caitra manifests as "a goer"—is not that which produces the going of that goer. Why?

> Because he does not exist prior to going
> Who goes and where does he go? (2:22cd)

Because someone is called "a goer" due to going, then prior to going manifesting [the goer], the goer does not exist. Someone is called "a goer" because only [the goer] possesses [going].

But if [you think] who goes and where he goes, such as a town or city, are divisible, then after becoming a goer—the going that goes [to a destination], such as a town or city, is not divisible from the goer.

Thus, first, by [the act of] going, he becomes a goer, but that going that manifests [the goer] is not the going engaged by the goer.

But if you think that something other than that goes, then:

> That going that is different from that by which [77]
> He becomes a goer is not the going of that goer (2:23ab)

Also, that going that is different from that by which Caitra comes to be called "a goer" when he possesses that going is not the act of going engaged by that goer. For what reason? Nāgārjuna explains:

> For the reason that two goings
> Are untenable for just one goer. (2:23cd)

For the reason that two goings—that by which one becomes "a goer" and that which goes having become a goer—are untenable for just one goer. Because of that, a going other than this is not the going engaged by the goer. Therefore such words are uttered. Also, the response [utilizes the term] "the act engaged by . . ."

Objection: Doesn't the destination of the goer, such as a town or city, exist?

Response: An answer has already been given to this. But in relation to the town, we have already considered what going exists where one has gone, what going exists where one has not gone, what going exists on that being gone over. Therefore, because of that, [your question is based on] flawed logic. Moreover, Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which is the goer
> Does not go in any of the three ways of going.
> That which is the nongoer
> Does not go in any of the three ways of going. (2:24)

> That which is the goer and nongoer
> Does not go in any of the three ways of going.
> Because of that there is no going,
> Goer, or even destination. (2:25)

In stating "that which is the goer," what goer possesses going? In stating "that which is the nongoer," what goer lacks going? In stating "that which is the goer and nongoer," what goer possesses going as well as lacks going? [78] "Going" is an equivalent term to "the destination of travel." "In three

ways" refers to where one has gone, where one has not gone, and that being gone over.

Therefore, in that way, if one thoroughly investigates this with a mind seeking the correct description [of reality], that which is the goer does not go in any of the three ways of going. That which is not the goer does not go in any of the three ways of going. That which is the goer and nongoer does not go in any of the three ways of going. Because of that there is no going, goer, or even destination.

From among actions, since the act of going is important, the act of going should be fully investigated. Just as going is fully established as untenable, so too all other actions are established as untenable.

This is the second chapter, called Critique of Going and Coming.

3. *Critique of Sense Bases*

Section Two

[Abhidharmikas] observe: Since you have clearly shown that going is impossible, our minds rejoice in hearing about emptiness. Therefore now the time has come to teach more of your textual system.

Response: We shall do just that.

Objection:

> Seeing, hearing, smelling,
> Tasting, touching, and the mental faculty
> Are the six faculties. Their object-fields [79]
> Are that which is visible and so on. (3:1)

Seeing and so on are taught to be the six sense faculties while their object-fields are taught to be the six objects such as visible form. Something is taught to be seeing since it sees visible form, and the others are taught in accordance with the specific objects they apprehend. If objects do not exist, it would be untenable to state that since something sees visible form it is seeing. When there is nothing to be seen, how could seeing see? If it could see, then even the horn of a rabbit could hook the fur of a tortoise and so on. But since this is impossible, sense bases therefore do exist.

Response: If it were acceptable to state, "It is seeing since it sees visible form," then sense-base [objects] would exist, but that is impossible. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Seeing does not see
> Itself at all.

If it does not see itself
How could it see others? (3:2)

If [seeing] sees the intrinsic reality of things in themselves, then it would observe that in others as well, since they possess [that nature]. For example, if you observe moistness in water, then you may also observe it in the earth, since it can possess [moistness]. And if you see hotness in fire, then you may also observe it in water, since it can possess [hotness]. And if you observe the fragrance of a nutmeg flower, then you may also observe it in clothes, since they can possess that [fragrance].

But if [seeing] does not see itself, how could it observe others? As such, it is like a vile aroma that is not seen in a nutmeg blossom [80] not being observed in clothes. Thus if seeing sees itself, it would be tenable to declare, "It is seeing, since it sees visible form." However, seeing does not see itself. If it does not see itself, how could it see others? Therefore it is unacceptable to state, "It is seeing, since it sees visible form." Master Āryadeva states:[63]

If the nature of all things
First appears in themselves,
Then why does the eye
Not apprehend itself? (xiii:16)

Objection: Seeing and so on are established in the same manner as fire. For example, though fire burns, it burns others and it does not burn itself. So too, though seeing sees, it sees others and it does not see itself.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

The example of fire is
not capable of establishing seeing. (3:3ab)

63. CŚ, xiii:16. TCE (p. 80): *dngos po kun gyi rang bzhin ni, thog mar bdag la snang gyur na, mig nyid la yang mig gis ni, ci yi phyir na 'dzin mi 'gyur*. Derge (D 3846: 14b7): *dngos po kun gyi rang bzhin ni, dang por bdag la snang 'gyur na, mig ni mig nyid kyis 'dzin par, ci yi phyir na 'gyur ma yin*.

The term "not capable" ultimately means "insufficient" or "incapable."[64] The example of fire formulated by you is not capable of establishing seeing [sees itself]. Why? Because in this [world] it is indeed said that "fuel is burned" and when fire declines from [lack of] fuel it ceases. Therefore it is not that fire burns itself or others. But if you maintain they are not distinct, yet conceive that fuel is that burned, and fire is that which burns, then we also assert that fuel is that which burns and fire is that burned! Moreover, a specific [81] proof must be declared. Master Āryadeva states:[65]

> Fire, which is by nature hot, burns,
> But how could that which is not hot burn?
> Therefore so-called fuel does not exist.
> Not only that, also fire does not exist. (xiv:16)

That being so, the example of fire is incapable [of proving the thesis].

In this regard, if some think that fire illuminates both itself and others, then this also is inadequate [as a proof], for just as fire would illuminate both itself and others, so too it would burn both itself and others.

If someone says that it burns others but it does not burn itself, then how could it be tenable that fire burns others but does not burn itself, and similarly how could seeing see others but not see itself?

Again he may say, "Why is it not the case that just as fire illuminates itself and others, so too regarding seeing, seeing sees both itself and others," for it is said that "One sees oneself"? So too, in this world speakers declare, "I myself apprehend myself." But since such words refer to "one's own self," the example of fire is not adequate to establish seeing. Moreover:

> That along with seeing are countered
> By where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over. (3:3cd)

"Along with seeing" refers to that accompanying seeing. What is that? It is the example of fire. This means that both the example together with

64. The term "not capable" (*nus ma yin, na paryāpta*) here refers to "insufficient" or "inadequate" (*mi chog, nālaṁ*), or "incapable" or "impossible" (*mi nus, na śakyaḥ*).

65. CŚ, xiv:16. TCE (p. 81): *mes ni tsha ba nyid bsegs ste, tsha ba la yin ji ltar bsreg, des na bud shing zhes bya med, de ma gtogs par me yang med.* Derge (D 3846: 15b7): *tsha ba me nyid du 'gyur te, tsha ba mi par ji ltar bsreg, des na bud shing zhes bya ba, yod min de med med yod min.*

seeing are countered[66] in the same manner. By what means have they been countered? [82] They are [rejected] by where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over. Having examined where one has gone and that being gone over, then it is said that there is no going where one has gone, where one has not gone, and on that being gone over. So too fire does not burn that already burned nor that not yet burned. Also, seeing does not see what is already seen, and it does not see what is not yet seen. Also, it does not see that which is being seen. Thus, if fire does not burn and seeing does not see, what then does [fire] exemplify? Therefore, the example of fire is inadequate to establish seeing. Furthermore:

> When it does not see at all
> It is not seeing.
> How could it be logical
> To say it is seeing since it sees? (3:4)

In fact, your statement "It is seeing, since it sees visible form" attributes the condition of the action to the agent, such that it is seeing since it sees. Therefore, if it sees, it is seeing, if it does not see, it is not seeing. Because of that, if when it sees it is seeing but when it does not see it is not [seeing], then at that time, how could it be logical to say it is seeing since it sees? Thus it is appropriate to ask, "Due to what then does seeing see?" But how could there be a second act of seeing?

However, if you imagine a second [83] act of seeing even when one doesn't exist, then this also is unacceptable, since it would absurdly follow there would be two seeings and also two seers. Therefore it is untenable to say, "It is seeing since it sees visible form."

But if you imagine the fault of there being two acts of seeing is untenable, since something is seeing since it sees by reason that seeing itself possesses the act of seeing, then, as Nāgārjuna explains:

> Seeing does not see. (3:5a)

If you imagine that "seeing sees," then this is not logical because "sees" does not possess the act of seeing.

66. Counter (*lan btab, prayukta*). This term indicates a response in the form of a pronouncement or a rejoinder, that here denies an objection.

But if you think that it is untenable that this error arises, and therefore "sees" possesses the act of seeing, then Nāgārjuna says:

> Nonseeing does not see. (3:5b)

As such, on this point, seeing that lacks the act of seeing is not seeing. Here it is untenable to say, "How could nonseeing see?" For how could nonseeing come to see? But if it sees, even your fingertips would see, but they do not see. That being so, it is also not tenable to say that nonseeing sees.

Objection: The "condition of the action" refers to the action and does not refer to the agent. Due to this, it may be asked, "If it is seeing, since it sees, what then sees?" [The answer is] "It is the seer."

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Understand that as seeing is explained
> So also the seer. (3:5cd)

It was said:

> Seeing does not see
> Itself at all.
> If it does not see itself
> How could it see others? (3:2)

The statement "It is seeing, since it sees" has already been refuted. One should understand that just as seeing is refuted, so also the seer is refuted. [84] Why? Here no alternate explanation is required because these words rebut the assertion "the eye is the seer" and absolutely negate the assertion that "the self is the seer." Whether seeing is considered to be the seer or the self is considered to be the seer, the reason refuting either is the same.

Here there is another fault. If the seer sees with his seeing, in consequence there would be three seeings.

Objection: What use is it for one to say "seeing sees" or "the seer sees"? Seeing with which one sees existent [things], such as a vase and cloth, does exist.

Response: Are you guideless and confused in the wilderness? Or do you assert that objects of seeing and seeing itself exist without a seer? Nāgārjuna explains:

> The seer would not exist if seeing
> Is refuted or not refuted.
> When there is no seer, how could
> The object seen and seeing exist? (3:6)

It was earlier stated, "He is a seer when he sees, but he is not a seer when he does not see." Therefore, he is a seer because he possesses seeing. But one cannot say "the seer sees," because two actions of seeing do not exist.

Thus, first, if seeing were not refuted, still the seer would not exist, since it is not the seer. Now it is said that also the nonseer would not have seeing because he lacks the act of seeing. So too if seeing is refuted, the seer would not exist. Though it is tenable that seeing either exists or does not exist, when there is no seer, how for you could the object seen and seeing exist?

Thus something becomes an object seen due to that which sees it, but that which sees it does not exist. If it does not exist, how then could seeing arise? If it does not see, how could there be [85] an object seen?

That which sees by any means would be the seeing of something, but that which sees does not exist. If it does not exist, how then does seeing arise? If it does not see, how could there be an object seen? If it sees and there is no seer, then the object seen and seeing would be untenable. Therefore, sense bases do not exist!

Objection: Sense bases exist. Why? Because consciousness exists. Thus consciousness, which observes objects exists. Because [consciousness] exists, sense bases also exist.[67]

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

67. At this point, Chandrakīrti in the PsP cites another verse, which interestingly is absent from the BP translation: *pratītya mātāpitarau yathoktaḥ putrasaṁbhavaḥ/ cakṣūrūpe pratītyaivamukto vijñānasaṁbhavaḥ//* This verse then leads into the BP v. 7, though strictly speaking it does not seem necessary—indeed, it trends away from the negational flow. This explains why that version of the *Wisdom* has nine verses instead of the eight of the BP.

> Because the object seen and seeing do not exist
> The four such as consciousness
> Do not exist. How then could
> Appropriation and so on come to exist? (3:7)

It has been explained that when there is no seer, then the object seen and seeing are untenable. At that time how could consciousness exist? So too, apart from the object seen, what would consciousness [observe]? If seeing does not exist, how then, without relying upon it, could consciousness come to exist? But if it did, it would even exist for the blind, but it doesn't. That being so, if the object seen and seeing do not exist, consciousness is impossible, and its existence is untenable. If consciousness does not exist, how could contact exist? If contact does not exist, how could feeling exist? If feeling does not exist, how could craving exist? Similarly, how could appropriation [or grasping], existence, birth, and aging and death [86] also come to exist? Therefore, sense bases do not exist. The Bhagavān also stated:[68]

> Noble shrāvakas, visible form that is the object of eye consciousness that occurred in the past, that will occur in future, and that occurs in the present is not in any way permanent, nor stable, nor suchness, nor undifferentiated suchness, nor nonerroneous suchness. Such illusion exists. The production of such illusion exists. The mind producing it through confusion exists. Such inferior states exist. In reflecting on this, you should make a proper examination.

Objection: Even if you have refuted seeing, still you have not yet refuted hearing and so forth. As such, things exist because hearing and so on still exist.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Understand hearing, smell, taste,
> Touch, and the mental faculty,

68. Portions of passages similar to what is cited here in the BP appear in the *Sūtra Requested by Ārya Subāhu* (D 70: 173a1–7).

The hearer and object heard and so on,
In accordance with the explanation on seeing. (3:8)

Understand hearing and so on in accordance with this explanation. How then should they be explained? In accordance with the explanation of seeing, understand what was untenable for seeing when comprehensively analyzed also applies to hearing and so on. Understand what was untenable for the seer also applies to the hearer and so on. Understand what was untenable for a visible object also applies to an audible object and so on. Hence understand how sense bases are also established as emptiness.

This is the third chapter, called Critique of Sense Bases. [87]

4. Critique of Aggregates

[Abhidharmikas] object: Here the five aggregates, such as material form, are taught. They are said to be suffering, for they are described as the noble truth of suffering. How then could the noble truth of suffering not exist? Thus the aggregates do exist.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Form is not observed
> Separate from the cause of form. (4:1ab)

If the four great elements are said to be the cause of form, and form is said to be their effect, then an effect called "form" that is separate from the four great elements and distinct from those four great elements does not exist in the least. As such, form is not tenable.

Objection: First the primary elements exist because the cause of form exists. Since the effect also exists, form also is actually established.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> A cause of form separate
> From form is not seen. (4:1cd)

That which is separate from form but is also said to be a cause of form is not seen. It has already been mentioned that form is untenable, and because such form is untenable, so too the cause of form is untenable.

Objection: You deny the effect in dependence on a cause and [88] you deny the cause in dependence on an effect. Therefore in dependence on

what do you deny the [existence of] the other? But some do exist! And if one exists, then the other also is established!

Response: You cannot say that the other exists. Why? Here Nāgārjuna explains:

> If form is separate from the cause of form
> It would follow that form lacks a cause.
> But an object that lacks a cause
> Does not exist anywhere. (4:2)

If an effect existed due to its cause, then at the time [of the effect], it would lack a cause. But an object that lacks a cause is neither seen nor revealed anywhere. Otherwise, it would absurdly follow that everything would eternally arise from everything, and all endeavor would be pointless. So too:

> If the cause of form existed
> Separate from form,
> The cause would lack an effect.
> But a cause that lacks an effect does not exist. (4:3)

If the cause existed even though its effect was denied, it would absurdly follow that the cause would lack an effect. But a cause that lacks an effect does not exist because otherwise the statement "This [cause] has that [effect]" would be untenable, and it would follow that everything would become the cause of everything. That being so, the causes of form are untenable, and also it is untenable that form is an effect. [89] Moreover:

> When form exists,
> The cause of form is just not tenable.
> Also, when form does not exist,
> A cause of form is not tenable. (4:4)

If one examines what is the cause of form, either one examines form that exists or otherwise one examines form that does not exist. But when form exists, the cause of form is not tenable, and also when it does not exist, it is not tenable.

First, when form exists, it is not tenable, for what use would its cause be once it exists? But even when [form] exists, if the action of its cause were required, then such action would never not be required. But this is unacceptable, for when form exists, the cause of form is untenable.

Also, when form does not exist, the cause of form is not tenable, for when form does not exist, what would it be the cause of? That being so, when form does not exist, the cause of form is also untenable.

Indeed, this has already been clearly explained in the refutation of conditions:

> Conditions are not tenable
> For a nonexistent or an existent object. (1:6ab)

Moreover, this is repeated here:

> Form without a cause
> Is untenable and impossible. (4:5ab)

Spontaneously arisen form that does not exhibit a cause is impossible and untenable. Why? Because otherwise it would absurdly follow that everything would eternally arise, and the fault that all endeavor is pointless would ensue. That being so, [Nāgārjuna] frequently [90] explained that one should continually remind oneself of the untenability and nonviability of the view of causelessness because it is utterly implausible.

> Therefore, one should never fabricate
> Conceptions about form. (4:5cd)

Because form is not observed apart from the cause of form, the cause of form is impossible whether form exists or not, and form without a cause is untenable and impossible—therefore, it is fitting that those endowed with wisdom, such as yourself, who desire to comprehend reality, should never fabricate conceptions about form. How then could it be fitting to hold such opinions about something that is not established?

Moreover, Nāgārjuna explains:

To say the effect is similar
To the cause is untenable.
To say the effect is not similar
To the cause is untenable. (4:6)

When the effect is examined with respect to the cause, either the effect is similar to the cause or the effect is not similar to the cause. Here, to say the effect is similar to the cause is untenable, for in this philosophical system form is an effect of the primary elements. To say the effect is not similar to the cause is untenable, for in this philosophical system form is an effect of the primary elements. In what way? The nature of the primary elements is said to be solidity, liquidity, heat, and mobility, [91] yet these qualities of the primary elements are not [necessarily] observed in form. Therefore, because we observe solidity in earth, liquidity in water, heat in fire, and mobility in wind, the effect is not similar to the cause, nor is the cause similar to the effect.

Thus it is not possible to say that "Form is the effect [of the primary elements]."

Feeling, discernment, formation,
And mind, as well as all things
In every respect,
Are the same as form. (4:7)

Feeling, discernment, formation, and consciousness, they are untenable in the same way that form is untenable. And just as form does not exist apart from the primary elements, so too feeling does not exist apart from contact. Just as the cause of form does not exist apart from form, so too contact does not exist apart from feeling. Therefore the Bhagavān also said:[69]

The feeling of pleasure arises in dependence on contact that facilitates pleasure.

The remainder should be treated in just the same way. Therefore to say that the aggregates exist is not tenable. The Bhagavān has also declared:[70]

69. *Foundations of Mindfulness Sūtra* (D 287: 113b1).
70. *Sūtra on the Play of Mañjuśrī* (D 96: 238a6).

This illusion (*māyā*) deceives children.

Ādityabandhu [Shākyamuni Buddha] also stated:[71]

Form is like a mass of froth,
Feelings are like bubbles,
Discernment is like a mirage,
Formation is like a plantain tree,
And consciousness is like an illusion.

Form that comprises one transient component of the aggregates is untenable, and the method [for establishing] their untenability is the same. Not only that, just as form is untenable, so too all phenomena are [92] untenable, and the method [for establishing] their untenability is the same. Thus, because all phenomena are untenable, since form itself is untenable, the method [for establishing] their untenability is the same. Therefore Nāgārjuna explains:

When dispute arises due to emptiness
And some offer responses,
All such [interjections] are not responses,
They are the same in remaining to be proven. (4:8)

When dispute and division arise due to emptiness and some offer responses by negating emptiness, at that time all such [interjections] are not responses. Why? Because they are the same in remaining to be proven [by the disputant].[72] Thus, for instance, regarding the proposition "All things are empty of intrinsic reality," when cloth is being established as empty of intrinsic reality, [the disputant] may interject, "Thread that is its cause exists," in order to demonstrate an example. But this remains to be proven [by the disputant]. Any proof that demonstrates that the cloth is empty of intrinsic reality also fully establishes that thread, its cause, is also empty. Therefore, because of that, demonstrating that thread, its cause, is

71. *Sūtra on the Play of Mañjuśrī* (D 96: 239b7).
72. "The same in remaining to be proven (*sgrub par bya dang mtshung par gyur, sādhyasama*) by the disputant" refers to all other instances offered by the disputant that don't actually prove the point to be proven.

not empty, is the same [as proving] the cloth [is not empty], which is the point to be proven [by the disputant].

In the same way, beings who know the relevance of Dharma think and say, "The nature of virtuous Dharmas is virtue, and the rest should be ascertained in the same way." [They may also say] virtuous Dharmas are empty by nature because they are dependently arisen. But [in not understanding] lack of intrinsic reality, [such words] are the same as [what the disputant] seeks to prove, and do not constitute a refutation of the point he seeks to prove. [93] Master Āryadeva also said:[73]

> How you see one thing
> Is also how you see them all.
> The emptiness of one [thing]
> Is the emptiness of all. (viii:16)

Thus,

> When explanations are made based on emptiness,
> Some may express criticism.
> But all such speech is false criticism,
> It is the same in remaining to be proven. (4:9)

When explanations are made based on emptiness [revealing that] things lack any intrinsic reality, some may express criticism by denying emptiness. But all such [speech uttered] by them is false criticism because they are the same in remaining to be proven [by the disputant] as before. Indeed, it is identical. Also we have demonstrated this in various other contexts.

These two verses should be seen as relevant to each chapter because they are universally applicable.

This is the fourth chapter, called Critique of Aggregates.

73. CŚ, viii:16.. TCE (p. 93): *dngos po gcig la gang lta ba, de ni kun la'ang lta bar 'dod, gcig gi ltong nyid gang yin pa, de nyid kun gyi stong pa nyid.* Derge (D 3846: 9b6): *dngos po gcig gi lta po gang, de ni kun gyi lta por bshad, gcig gi stong nyid gang yin pa, de ni kun gyi stong pa nyid.*

5. Critique of Elements

[Abhidharmikas] object: Here the six elements, such as earth and so on[74] are taught, and their individual characteristics are also taught. The defining characteristic of space is taught to be nonobstruction. Therefore space exists because its characteristics exist, for it is illogical to teach the characteristics of things if they do not exist. Just as space exists, so too the remaining elements exist, [94] because their characteristics exist.

Response: The defining characteristics of space are impossible. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Space does not exist in the least
> Prior to the characteristics of space. (5:1ab)

If prior to the characteristics of space, so-called space were to exist to some degree, it would be reasonable to point to this or that as the defining characteristic of space. But space does not exist prior to the characteristics of space. Therefore, how could it be tenable to speak of the characteristics of space, if space does not exist?

But if you consider that prior to the characteristics of space, space exists, then in that case:

> If something existed prior to its characteristics
> It would absurdly follow it has no characteristics. (5:1cd)

Objection: But something without characteristics exists.

74. The six elements are earth (*sa, pṛthivī*), water (*chu, ap*), fire (*me, teja*), wind (*rlung, vāyu*), consciousness (*rnam shes, vijñāna*), and space (*nam mkha', ākāśa*).

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> A thing without characteristics
> Has never existed anywhere. (5:2ab)

The term "any" means "ever."[75] A thing without characteristics has never existed anywhere, nor is it taught in any textual system. Thus it is reasonable that he declares:

> If a thing without characteristics does not exist,
> What would its characteristics define? (5:2cd) [95]

Here Nāgārjuna states:

> Characteristics do not apply to those
> Without characteristics . . . (5:3ab)

Thus because a thing without characteristics has never existed, therefore if a thing without characteristics does not exist, it is not tenable that characteristics apply[76] to a nonexistent basis.

But if you think that characteristics apply to things that possess characteristics, then:

> . . . Nor those with characteristics. (5:3b)

Nor is it tenable that characteristics apply to things with characteristics because things do not exist. What use would characteristics be to things that are already established with their own characteristics? Thus an infinite regress would absurdly follow, for then [things] would never be without characteristics, and characteristics would always define them. This also is unacceptable, for to assign characteristics in that way to things that already possess characteristics is untenable.

75. The term "any" (*yang, ca*) means "ever" (*nyid, eva*); when combined with a term of negation, it means "never."

76. "Apply" (*'jug, pravṛtti*). This term also implies that which enters or engages something or, here, that which defines or characterizes.

But if you think that such characteristics apply to things other than those with characteristics or without characteristics, then Nāgārjuna observes:

> Nor do they apply to anything other than
> Those with or without characteristics (5:3cd)

Why? Because it is impossible. If those with characteristics are not those without characteristics, and those without characteristics are not those with characteristics, then those with characteristics and those without characteristics form a dichotomy. [96] In that case, it is untenable that characteristics apply to anything other than those with characteristics or those without characteristics because that is utterly impossible.

> When characteristics do not define [something]
> A basis of those characteristics is not tenable. (5:4ab)

When characteristics do not define [something], then a basis of those characteristics is not tenable. Thus, though you note that elements are properly established since they possess characteristics, that is untenable because characteristics do not define those which possess characteristics. If they don't, how would a basis of those characteristics be tenable?

Objection: First, characteristics exist, for it is due to the existence of characteristics that a basis of those characteristics is established.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If a basis of those characteristics is untenable
> Also characteristics do not exist. (5:4cd)

Here, if characteristics occur in dependence on a basis of those characteristics, then also a basis of those characteristics is untenable. If a basis of those characteristics does not exist, how could characteristics without a basis be tenable? That being so, characteristics also do not exist.

> Therefore neither a basis of those characteristics exists
> Nor do characteristics exist. (5:5ab)

Thus, since it is untenable that characteristics define [a basis] when investigated from any perspective, therefore a basis of those characteristics does not exist. Since a basis of those characteristics does not exist, therefore characteristics without any basis also do not exist.

Objection: Indeed [97] one cannot state, "This is a basis of those characteristics" or "This is a characteristic." However, at times things do exist.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Nothing whatsoever exists separate from
> A basis of those characteristics or the characteristics themselves.
> (5:5cd)

If anything comes to exist, it is either a basis of those characteristics or the characteristics themselves. But that which is neither a basis of those characteristics nor the characteristics themselves does not exist. Therefore nothing whatsoever exists that is separate from a basis of those characteristics or the characteristics themselves.

Objection: But things surely exist. Why? Because nonthings exist. You have said that a basis of those characteristics and the characteristics themselves do not exist, but this was said with reference to things. Thus since a thing referenced in the statement "A nonthing" does exist, therefore things exist because nonthings exist.[77]

Response: Well said! If nonthings exist, then also things would exist. But how could things exist since nonthings do not exist? In what way? Nāgārjuna says:

> If a thing does not exist
> What would a nonthing pertain to? (5:6ab)

Previously he said:

77. Things (*dngos po, bhāva*) and nonthings (*dngos med, abhāva*) form a collectively exhaustive dichotomy whose categories are mutually exclusive.

Nothing whatsoever exists separate from
A basis of those characteristics or the characteristics themselves.
(5:5cd)

If a thing does not exist, you should investigate what would your nonthing pertain to. As such, [you may say], "It is the nonthing of a thing." But if a thing does not exist, [98] with respect to what would there be a nonthing? That being so, nonthings do not exist because things do not exist.

Objection: There are those who understand things and nonthings, and those who investigate things and nonthings. Since such beings exist, things and nonthings are properly established.

Nāgārjuna responds:

Things and nonthings are contradictory phenomena
But who understands things and nonthings? (5:6cd)

Contradictory phenomena are opposing phenomena,[78] and the contradictory phenomena of those things and nonthings are the opposing phenomena of those things and nonthings.

What are the contradictory phenomena of things and nonthings? Those that are not things and those that are not nonthings.

In that regard, if some [thing or nonthing] were to exist, would it be a phenomenon that is a thing or a phenomenon that is a nonthing? That which is not a phenomenon that is a thing, nor a phenomenon that is a nonthing, does not exist. But if contradictory phenomena that are things and nonthings do not exist, one should investigate who understands things and nonthings. That being so, one who understands things and nonthings does not exist.

Therefore, space is not a thing,
Nor a nonthing, nor a basis of characteristics,
Nor a characteristic . . . (5:7abc)

78. Contradictory phenomena (*mi mthun chos, vidharma*) are opposing phenomena (*bzlog pa'i chos, viparyayadharma*). TCE (p. 98) states *mi mthun pa'i chos ni de dag mi bzlog pa'i chos*, but here I follow Peking and Narthang versions (p. 98 note 1): *mi mthun pa'i chos ni de dag gi bzlog pa'i chos*.

Therefore, if this is investigated, neither a basis of characteristics nor the characteristics themselves exist, nor things that are other than a basis of characteristics and the characteristics themselves. If things [99] do not exist, then nonthings also do not exist. Therefore, space is not a thing, nor also a nonthing, nor also a basis of characteristics, nor even a characteristic.

In that case, if anything called "space" existed, it would not be different from these four. But since even these four do not exist, therefore space is nonexistent.

> . . . The other five elements
> Also are the same as space. (5:7cd)

"The same as space" means "the very same as space." They are the same as space, for when space is investigated, it is not a thing, nor a nonthing, nor a basis of characteristics, nor even a characteristic. Therefore, so-called space is none of them. So too any of the other five elements, such as earth, are not things, nor nonthings, nor bases of characteristics, nor even characteristics. Since things have never existed, therefore elements do not exist.

Objection: Buddhas who teach Dharma do so predominantly in dependence on the aggregates, elements, and bases, but if aggregates, elements, and bases do not exist, then wouldn't such teachings be pointless? Or if it is inappropriate [to say such teachings] are pointless, how then can such [aggregates and so on be nonexistent]?

Response: We do not say that aggregates, elements, and bases are nonexistent, but we refute those who say they are existent. Both of these [positions] are flawed. Also Nāgārjuna states below:

> "It exists" is adherence to eternalism.
> "It does not exist" is the view of nihilism.
> Therefore, scholars should not dwell in
> Existence or nonexistence. (15:10)

The Bhagavān [100] declared:[79]

> Kātyāyana, this world holds to two states, for in general it holds
> to existence or nonexistence.

Therefore, we say that due to dependent origination, [the aggregates and so on] are free of the fault of existence and nonexistence, we declare they are not annihilated and not permanent, but we do not say they do not exist. That being so, it is not pointless to teach Dharma in terms of aggregates, elements, and bases.

> Those of little intelligence
> View things as existent or nonexistent.
> They do not see what should be seen,
> That which is fully pacified and peaceful. (5:8)

Those of little intelligence, whose eye of intelligence is obscured, do not comprehend supremely profound dependent origination, since they view things as existent or nonexistent, and they view them as annihilated or permanent. Therefore they do not see what should be seen—nirvana, that which is fully pacified and peaceful. Thus, revealing the Dharma in dependence on aggregates, bases, and elements is pointless for those who do not see reality perfectly as it is, who possess a mind attracted to mental fabrication. That being so, do not be afraid, for this is ultimate reality.

Objection: Why is space investigated first? It would be logical to first investigate the element of earth, since when teaching the elements, the element of earth is first.

Response: In general, that which is well known helps establish that which is not well known. Conversely, the world tends to regard space as nothing at all. Some say, [101] "all mental constructs are [like] space," and therefore they think that everything is in fact nothing at all. Therefore, in order to

79. This same verse from a Pāli (?) sūtra (not in the Tibetan canon) is also cited by Bhāviveka in his *Lamp of Wisdom* (D 3853: 160a1).

demonstrate an example that reveals that the other five elements are the same as space, first space is taught for the purpose of establishing emptiness.

This is the fifth chapter, called Critique of Elements.

6. *Critique of Attachment and One Who Is Attached*

[Abhidharmikas] observe: You have taught the emptiness of the aggregates, elements, and bases, and we wish to hear about emptiness. Therefore, it is now appropriate to investigate attachment and one who is attached.[80]

Response: We shall do just that.

Objection: The refutation of attachment and one who is attached has been taught in various contexts. Also, the logic that fully pacifies attachment has been taught. But if they do not exist, then it is illogical to teach the reasoning that fully pacifies them. If you are not bitten by a snake, mantra and medicine are of no use. That being so, attachment and one who is attached exist.

Response: Attachment and one who is attached are impossible. In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If prior to attachment
> One who is attached exists without attachment,
> Attachment would exist in dependence on that. [102]
> If one who is attached exists then attachment exists. (6:1)

If prior to attachment one who is attached exists without attachment but with [emotional] states other than attachment, then attachment would exist in dependence on [one who is attached]. Why? If one who is attached exists, then attachment exists. (6:1d)

Thus if one who is attached exists, it would be tenable to say, "This also

80. Attachment (*'dod chags, rāga*) and one who is attached (*chags pa, rakta*).

is his attachment." If one who is attached did not exist, then whose attachment would it be? Thus since attachment is untenable when there is no basis [of attachment], therefore attachment is untenable if one who is attached does not exist.

Objection: If one who is attached exists, attachment exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Even if one who is attached exists,
> How could attachment exist? (6:2ab)

But for you, even if one who is attached exists, how could attachment actually exist? In that case, one who is attached would not engage in attachment at all. If one who is attached does not act [with attachment], how could attachment come to be? But if it does arise, he would never not have attachment. Since this is unacceptable, even if one who is attached exists, attachment is not tenable.

Objection: First, one who is attached exists, for attachment is fully established since [one who is attached] shares a contingent relation with attachment.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Whether attachment exists or not,
> The method is the same for one who is attached. (6:2cd)

If you imagine one who is attached exists, then whether attachment exists or not, for one who is attached, attachment is completely untenable, and the method [of refutation] is the same.[81] Why? [103]

> If prior to one who is attached,
> Attachment exists for one who is not attached,

81. The method of refutation is the same (*rim pa tshungs*, *samaḥ krama*) whether negating the existence of attachment or one who is attached.

One who is attached would exist in dependence on that.
If attachment exists, then one who is attached exists.
(variant of 6:1[82])

If prior to one who is attached, attachment exists [in a person] other than one who is attached but in one who is not attached, then one who is attached would exist in dependence on [attachment]. Why? If attachment exists, then one who is attached exists. Thus if attachment exists, it would be tenable to say, "This is one who is attached." If attachment did not exist, how would he become one who is attached? If he is a person without attachment, how would he become one who is attached? But if he became [one who is attached], he would not be a person without any attachment; therefore this is unacceptable. Because of that, if attachment does not exist, then one who is attached is not tenable.

But if you think that if attachment exists, one who is attached would exist, then it is said:

Even if attachment exists,
How would one who is attached exist? (variant of 6:2ab)

If attachment were to manifest in you, how could you be one who is not attached?

Thus if you have attachment, and you were one who is attached, you would be one who is not attached, for you would not become one who is attached due to that attachment. How would one who is not attached become one who is attached? But if you were to become [one who is attached], you would never not be one who is attached; therefore this is unacceptable:

Whether one who is attached exists or not,
The method is the same for attachment. (variant of 6:2cd) [104]

Therefore even if attachment were to exist, one who is attached is not tenable.

82. Here Buddhapālita states a variation of verse 6:1 in order to establish the assertion of verse 6:2cd. This variation reverses the central terms of 6:1 to demonstrate the negation applies symmetrically. This technique is also applied below in variant of 6:2ab, variant of 6:2cd, variant of 13:4ab, and variant of 13:7ab.

Objection: Neither attachment nor one who is attached exist in a temporal sequence, for these two arise together.

Nāgārjuna explains:

> It is not that attachment and
> One who is attached arise together (6:3ab)

It is not tenable that attachment and one who is attached arise together. Why?

> For then attachment and one who is attached
> Would be mutually independent. (6:3cd)

If attachment and one who is attached were to arise simultaneously, attachment and one who is attached would be mutually independent. If that were so, it would not be possible to say, "This is his attachment," and, "Due to this he is one who is attached." If these [expressions] do not exist, then attachment would not be possible, and also one who is attached would not be possible. Thus if attachment is that which excites one who is attached, and one who is attached is one who is excited by attachment, then it is untenable that they are simultaneously arisen states that are mutually independent. Therefore it is illogical that attachment and one who is attached arise simultaneously.

Moreover, the attachment and one who is attached that are said by you to be coexistent are either the same or distinct. In this regard [Nāgārjuna] says:

> A single entity is not coexistent (6:4a)

First, if something is a single entity,[83] it is not tenable that it is coexistent.[84] Why? [105]

> For it is not coexistent with itself. (6:4b)

83. Single entity (*gcig nyid, ekatva*).
84. Coexistent (*lhan gcig nyid, sahabhāva*).

Here, that called "a single ox" is just a single entity, and it refers to one ox. But how could that single ox be coexistent with just that single ox itself? Therefore if something is a single entity, being coexistent is untenable.

Objection: But if distinct, they would be coexistent.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> But if distinct
> How could they be coexistent? (6:4cd)

If something is a single entity, it is untenable for it to be coexistent. But if they are distinct entities,[85] how could they be coexistent? Thus if distinct incompatible entities are coexistent, then how could those two incompatible states exist together as one? Therefore, even though they are distinct, it is not tenable for them to be coexistent.

But even if you consider this to be untenable, and consider attachment and one who is attached to be coexistent, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If a single entity were coexistent
> It would be coexistent even without a companion.
> If distinct entities were coexistent
> They would be coexistent even without a companion. (6:5)

Now, if attachment and one who is attached were a single entity but coexistent, then in that case [a single entity] would be coexistent even without a companion.[86] In what way? Here [106] "one" refers to a single entity, and a single entity called "one ox" or "one horse" refers to an ox or a horse. Wherever a single entity exists, also coexistence would exist. And it follows that a single ox or a single horse would coexist even without a companion. As such, considering this to be coexistence would be pointless.

But if those which are distinct are coexistent, then in that case they would be coexistent even without a companion. How is that? Since a horse is distinct from an ox and an ox is distinct from a horse, wherever distinction

85. Distinct entities (*tha dad nyid*, *pṛthak*).
86. Companion (*grogs*, *sahāyaṁ*).

exists there also coexistence would exist, and it follows that a solitary ox itself and a solitary horse itself would coexist even without being companions. In that case also, considering this to be coexistence is meaningless.

Objection: Distinction does not exist in oxen, nor does it exist in horses, but coexistence exists for both, just as union is a shared general result of both. But if distinction exists for each, and distinction is twofold, then entities would exist separately without mutual dependence. But this is unacceptable. Therefore, distinction exists in two entities that coexist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If distinct entities are coexistent
> What about attachment and one who is attached?
> If they are established as distinct
> These two would be coexistent. (6:6)

Indeed, distinction exists between two entities. But if you imagine that two distinct entities [107] exist that are coexistent, then in that case, what is established with regard to attachment and one who is attached? When you imagine it to be so, those two would surely be established as distinct. If that is the case, these two should be considered to be coexistent, because they are established as distinct entities.

> If attachment and one who is attached
> Are solely established as distinct entities
> What is the point of considering
> These two to be coexistent? (6:7)

The term "solely" means "only." But if you think that attachment and one who is attached are solely established as distinct entities, then what is the point of vainly considering these two to be coexistent, for when they are established as distinct entities you already assume them to be coexistent entities? However, attachment and one who is attached do not oppose nor merge with each other in the least. Thus the point is, what use is attachment to one who is attached? That being so, though you already imagine them to be coexistent entities, it is pointless to consider them to be coexistent enti-

ties, for then just this error that they would be distinct ensues. This is like pouring water on a burnt stump.

> Do you assert they are coexistent
> Since they are not established as distinct? [108]
> Or do you also assert they are distinct
> In order to establish they are coexistent? (6:8)

Do you assert in fact that attachment and one who is attached are coexistent since they are not established as distinct, for there is no need for [such distinction]?

Or do you also assert they are distinct in order to establish they are coexistent? Because the error of being the same entity arises for coexistent entities, their [coexistence] is not established.

You are like a poorly clothed person hard pressed by a strong wind who hunches up, but when hunching up becomes unbearable, he stretches out. Nāgārjuna explains:

> Since distinct things are not established
> Coexistent things are not established.
> What distinction exists
> For you to assert coexistent things? (6:9)

In that regard, does distinction exist for each separately, or do both exist together?

For those for whom attachment and one who is attached are distinct, it would be completely impossible to say, "This is attachment," and "This is one who is attached due to this." But if distinct things[87] are not established, coexistent things[88] are not established. If you assert distinct things exist, and you assert these two exist as coexistent things, then even these distinct things would not be established in any way. If distinct things do not exist, how would your coexistent things come to be?

But what distinction exists for you to assert that attachment and one who is attached exist as coexistent things? Does [such distinction] exist in

87. Distinct things (*tha dad pa'i dngos po, pṛthagbhāva*).
88. Coexistent things (*lhan gcig dngos po, sahabhāva*).

each separately, or does it exist in both [109] which occur simultaneously, or does it exist in some other things invented by you? Tell me what distinction exists [for you to] assert attachment and one who is attached are coexistent things.

> Thus attachment is not established to be coexistent
> Or not coexistent with one who is attached.
> As with attachment, no phenomena are
> Established as coexistent or not coexistent. (6:10)

It was earlier stated:

> If prior to attachment
> One who is attached exists without attachment,
> Attachment would exist in dependence on that.
> If one who is attached exists then attachment exists. (6:1)

Such prior statements [indicate] attachment is not established as coexistent with one who is attached nor with one who is not attached. Just as attachment is not established as coexistent with one who is attached nor one who is not attached, so too no phenomena are established as coexistent with some or any [other thing].

This is the sixth chapter, called Critique of Attachment and One Who Is Attached.

7. Critique of Arising, Enduring, and Disintegrating

[Abhidharmikas] observe: Through your critique of attachment and one who is attached, you have inspired us to hear about emptiness. Therefore, it would now be appropriate to investigate [110] the characteristics of conditioned phenomena.

Response: We shall now do that.

Objection: Here the general characteristics of conditioned phenomena[89] are taught to be arising, enduring, and disintegrating.[90] But since it is illogical to teach the characteristics of what is nonexistent, conditioned phenomena [must] exist because their characteristics exist.

Response: Yet since the characteristics of conditioned phenomena are not tenable, how could conditioned phenomena exist because their characteristics exist? In what way? Previously Nāgārjuna said:

> Characteristics do not apply to those
> Without characteristics nor those with characteristics. (5:3ab)

Thus they have already been refuted. Moreover:

> If arising is a conditioned phenomenon,
> It would possess the three characteristics.

89. Conditioned or created phenomena (*'dus byas, saṁskṛta*).
90. The three characteristics (*mtshan nyid gsum, trilakṣaṇa*) of impermanent entities: (1) arising (*skye ba, utpāda*), (2) enduring (*gnas pa, sthiti*), (3) disintegrating (*'jig pa, bhaṅga*).

> But if arising is unconditioned
> How could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon?
> (7:1)

The fourth line [the conclusion] should also be applied to the first line [the proposition]:

> If arising is a conditioned phenomenon
> How could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon?
> (7:1a,d)

Arising that is taught to be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon is either conditioned or unconditioned.

First, if one examines conditioned phenomena, then arising itself would possess three characteristics—that is, the three characteristics of arising, enduring, and disintegrating—because it is a conditioned phenomenon. For that which possesses the three characteristics, the three characteristics would assemble together.

Objection: [But arising] also does possess three characteristics.

[Response: Nāgārjuna has said:]

> How could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon?
> (7:1d)

If [1] arising possesses the characteristics of arising, enduring, and disintegrating, and if also [2] enduring possesses the characteristics of arising, enduring, and disintegrating, and if also [3] disintegration possesses the characteristics of arising, enduring, and disintegrating, [III] then these characteristics would not be different because their characteristics are the same. But if [their characteristics] are not different, how could it be said, "This is arising," "This is enduring," "This is disintegrating"?

Objection: There is no fault, for just as they already qualify as the general characteristics of conditioned phenomena, it is in reliance on specific characteristics that statements such as "This is a vase" or "This is cloth" exist.

So too here also arising, enduring, and disintegrating are fully established in reliance on specific characteristics. But how are they different? They are that which causes generation, that which causes endurance, and that which causes destruction.

Response: This is not tenable. Why? Anything that causes the generation of a vase and the establishment of a vase does not cause the generation of something else. That which causes the endurance of a vase does not cause the endurance of something else, and that which causes the destruction of a vase does not cause the destruction of something else.

Objection: There is no fault since they cause the generation, the endurance, and the destruction of a vase.

Response: But these are not the characteristics of a vase because they are its *agents*. For example, a father who begets a son is not a characteristic of his son, and a basis [that supports a vase] and a hammer [that destroys a vase] are not characteristics of a vase. Thus, if arising and so on are conditioned phenomena, it is not tenable that they are the characteristics of conditioned phenomena.

But if you imagine arising to be an unconditioned phenomenon, then we shall explain this, for Nāgārjuna said:

> How could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon?
> (7:1d)[91]

If something is an unconditioned phenomenon, how could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon? If it were a characteristic since it characterized something, then it would not even characterize itself since it would lack arising, enduring, and disintegrating. [112] How could that which does not characterize itself characterize [something] other? But if it did, it follows that even an unconditioned phenomenon, such as nirvana, would be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon, but that is unacceptable.

91. TCE (p. 111) states *'di ltar 'dus byas tshan nyid yin*. But the context and subsequent commentary suggest this passage should be *ji ltar 'dus byas tshan nyid yin*, which comprises the fourth line of verse one.

That being so, even if arising, enduring, and disintegrating were unconditioned phenomena, it is untenable that they are characteristics of conditioned phenomena.

When characteristics are examined, then arising, enduring, and disintegrating would have to be the characteristics of conditioned phenomena either separately or collectively. Nāgārjuna declares:

> Separately, the three such as arising are not capable
> Of acting as characteristics of conditioned phenomena.
> Even collectively, how could they
> Exist in one thing at the same time? (7:2)

Also arising, enduring, and disintegrating are not capable of separately[92] acting as characteristics of conditioned phenomena. The term "not capable"[93] ultimately means "insufficient" or "incapable."[94] In what way? At times things are not actually established; and arising, enduring, and disintegrating are not tenable for what is nonexistent. Thus, arising, enduring, and disintegrating are dependent on things, for if the arising of a vase, the enduring of a vase, and the disintegration of a vase did not actually establish the vase, then what would arising, enduring, and disintegrating be the characteristics of?

To say "It is disintegrating" means it has disintegrated[95] and it is nonexistent, for that which has [that characteristic] does not exist. If it does not exist, then arising, enduring, and disintegrating would be the characteristics of what? In that case arising, enduring, and disintegrating are not actually established as things either separately or collectively, [113] and they are not characteristics of that which has disintegrated.

But if you think they are the characteristics of an actually established and nondisintegrated thing, then that also is untenable. In what way? In this regard, an existent thing called "a vase" has no arising, since for something that already exists the action of arising does not exist. But if, though already

92. Separately (*so so yis, vyatsā*).

93. Incapable (*nus min, nālaṁ*).

94. This explanation is the same as verse 3:3. The term "not capable" (*nus ma yin, na paryāpta*) here refers to "insufficient" or "inadequate" (*mi chog, nālaṃ*); or "incapable" or "impossible" (*mi nus, na śakyaḥ*).

95. Here different phases of the process of destruction are regarded as nonexistent: both that disintegrating (*'jig pa*) and that disintegrated (*zhig pa*).

existent it needed to arise again, it would never not [need to] arise. That being so, arising does not exist for an existent [thing]. Therefore, how could what is nonexistent become a characteristic?

Objection: Yet at times endurance exists!

Response: But endurance is also untenable. Why? Because enduring is related to disintegration. In fact, if conditioned phenomena are perpetually related to impermanence, how could they endure, because enduring and disintegrating are contradictory? Nāgārjuna explains below:

> It is not tenable that a thing
> Now ceasing endures.
> It is untenable for that which is
> Not now ceasing to be a thing. (7:23)

Also, Master Āryadeva stated:[96]

> How can things exist that do not endure?
> How can they endure since they are impermanent?
> If at first they were to endure
> In the end they would not age. (xi:17)
>
> If perpetual things are impermanent
> Perpetual things would not endure.
> Or else that which was permanent before
> Would become impermanent later. (xi:23)

96. CŚ, xi:17. TCE (p. 113): *gnas med dngos po ga la yod, mi rtag pas na gang la gnas, gal te dang po gnas gyur na, tha mar rnyings par mi 'gyur ro.* Derge (D 3846: 12b6): *gnas med dngos po ga la zhig, mi rtag pas gnas ga la yod, gal te dang por gnas gyur na, tha mar rnyings par mi 'gyur ro.*
CŚ, xi:23. TCE (p. 113): *gal te khor zug mi rtag yod, khor zug gnas par mi 'gyur ro, yang na rtag par gyur pa las, phyis nas mi rtag par yang 'gyur.* Derge (D 3846: 13a3): *gal te rtag tu mi rtag nyid, yod na rtag tu gnas yod min, yang na rtag par gyur zin nas, phyi nas mi rtag par 'gyur ro.*
CŚ, xi:24. TCE (p. 113): *gal te dngos po mi rtag dang, lhan cig gnas pa yod gyur na, mi rtag log par 'gyur ba 'am, yang no gnas pa brdzun par 'gyur.* Derge (D 3846: 13a3): *gal te gnas pa mi rtag dang, lhan cig dngos po la yod na, mi rtag log par 'gyur ba'am, yang na gnas pa brdzun par 'gyur.*

If things are impermanent
And endure simultaneously,
Either being impermanent is wrong
Or enduring is false. (xi:24)

That being so, also enduring does not exist, and if it does not exist, how could it be a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon?

Objection: But disintegration exists.

Response: How could there be disintegration without endurance? Thus if the endurance of a thing exists, it would come to disintegrate, but if enduring does not exist, how could it come to disintegrate? Further, that which is called "disintegrating" [114] means "disintegrated" and "nonexistent." That which has [that characteristic] does not exist. If it does not exist, it has already been taught that arising, enduring, and disintegrating would be the characteristics of what? Thus it is also not tenable that disintegration is a characteristic of a conditioned phenomenon.

Therefore it is not tenable that arising, enduring, and disintegrating are separately established as characteristics of conditioned phenomena. Because it is said they "arise simultaneously" and because those who know the reality of phenomena declare that arising, enduring, and disintegrating "arise simultaneously," therefore it is not tenable that they are characteristics, separately.

Objection: Collectively they are characteristics.

Nāgārjuna has said:

Even collectively, how could they
Exist in one thing at the same time? (7:2cd)

How could it be plausible that those which separately are not characteristics and collectively[97] are contradictory exist in one conditioned thing at the same time? In that case, when something is arising, at that time it

97. Collectively (*'dus pa, samastāḥ*).

is not enduring nor disintegrating. When something is enduring, at that time it is not arising nor disintegrating. When something is disintegrating, at that time it is not arising nor enduring. Therefore it is not tenable that arising, enduring, and disintegrating are the characteristics of conditioned phenomena either separately or collectively. Because characteristics are not tenable, conditioned phenomena do not exist.

Objection: Why do you solely employ fallacious arguments such as this? The arising, enduring, and disintegrating of anything are conditioned phenomena.

Response: Because they are fallacious arguments, we do not employ them [as proofs]. We employ them solely in order to make known [their fallacious nature]. Tell me, what is it that arises?

Objection: A vase arises.

Response: First, think well and tell me, at what point does a so-called "vase" come into being?

Objection: When it has not arisen, something called a vase is impossible. When it has arisen, it is called "a vase" and it possesses the three characteristics because a vase is a [115] conditioned phenomenon, and at that time "arising" is a characteristic of the vase.

Response: But how could this be tenable? What use is there for that which already exists to arise again? What use would characteristics be for something which already possesses characteristics?

But if you think that which is not a vase arises, and having arisen, it becomes a vase, then that also is illogical. Is that which is not a vase something which arises as a straw mat or a cloth? Or is that which is not a vase nothing at all? Or is it something else? What is it?

In that regard first, if it were a straw mat or cloth that arises, then having arisen [as that] how would it become a vase? But if that which is not a vase were nothing at all, how would that which is nothing at all arise? But if it were to arise, then why wouldn't even a rabbit with horns arise? Therefore so-called "arising" is not tenable.

If so-called "arising" does not exist, how could it be tenable to state, "Whatever arises is a conditioned phenomenon"? How could something that does not arise endure or disintegrate? As such, arising, enduring, and disintegrating are mere worldly designations.

Moreover:

> If arising, enduring, and disintegrating
> Have other characteristics of conditioned phenomena
> There would be an infinite regress.
> If not, they would not be conditioned phenomena. (7:3)

Arising, enduring, and disintegrating are taught to be the characteristics of conditioned phenomena. But do they [themselves] also have other characteristics of conditioned phenomena or not?

First, if they had other characteristics of conditioned phenomena, then it follows there would be an infinite regress, for also arising would have [the characteristic of] arising and other [characteristics], and those [other characteristics] would have [116] other [characteristics]. Since there would be an infinite regress, this is unacceptable.

But if you think that such an infinite regress is [here] illogical, for they have no other characteristics of conditioned phenomena, then in that case they would not be phenomena.

But if you say, "If they are not conditioned phenomena, then how would the characteristics of conditioned phenomena arise?" then [the refutation of] this has already been set out.

Section Three

Objection: Arising, enduring, and disintegrating are conditioned phenomena, but it does not follow there is an infinite regress. Why?

> The arising of arising causes
> The generation of primary arising alone.
> And primary arising also causes
> The generation of the arising of arising. (7:4)

If properties arise from phenomena such as consciousness, there are fifteen plus itself: (1) that phenomenon itself, (2) the arising of that phenomenon, (3) the enduring of that phenomenon, (4) the disintegrating of that phenomenon, (5) the possession of that phenomenon, (6) the aging of that phenomenon, and here (7) if that phenomenon were white [or virtuous], then that phenomenon would be liberation, or if that phenomenon were black [or nonvirtuous], then it would be the false liberation of that phenomenon. (8) So too if that phenomenon were renunciation, it would be the renunciation of that phenomenon. But if that phenomenon were nonrenunciation, then nonrenunciation of that phenomenon would be generated. These are called "retinue." [117]

Then (9) the arising of arising, (10) the endurance of endurance, (11) the disintegration of disintegration, (12) the possession of possession, (13) the aging of aging, (14) the liberation of liberation or the nonliberation of nonliberation, (15) the renunciation of renunciation or the nonrenunciation of nonrenunciation, arise. They are called the retinue of the retinue. As such, the property of arising plus [the basis] itself is the arising of fifteen.

That which is the primary arising causes the generation of fourteen that are said to be properties other than [the primary characteristic] itself. The arising of arising causes primary arising[98] alone. Thus, since one causes the generation of the other, an infinite regress does not occur. So too, primary endurance causes the endurance of endurance. The endurance of endurance causes primary endurance. Primary disintegration causes the disintegration of disintegration. The disintegration of disintegration causes primary disintegration. Therefore in that way, the consequence of an infinite regress does not arise.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If, for you, the arising of arising
> Causes the generation of primary arising,
> How for you could that which is not generated
> By primary arising, cause the generation of that? (7:5)

If, for you, the arising of arising causes the generation of primary arising, then how for you could the arising of arising, which is not generated before

98. Primary arising (*rtsa ba'i skye ba*, *mūlotpāda*).

by primary arising, cause the generation of that primary arising, because it itself has not arisen? [118]

Objection: The arising of arising is generated by primary arising alone, while it [i.e., the arising of arising] causes the generation of primary arising, it is not that it does not cause the generation of it.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If, for you, primary [arising] generates
> Primary [arising] through that being generated,
> Then how could it cause the generation of that,
> Through primary arising not being generated? (7:6)

If, for you, primary arising causes the generation of primary arising through the arising of arising being generated, then how could the arising of arising cause the generation of the arising of arising through primary arising not being generated? Thus, [for you,] one depends on the other, but in this context it is never permissible that one depends on the other.

Objection: The arising that now arises causes the generation of the arising of arising, but that which has not yet arisen does not.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If, for you, that now arising and not yet arisen
> Can cause the generation of that,
> Then you would have to accept
> It generates that. (7:7)

If, for you, that primary arising that is now arising and not yet arisen can cause the generation of another arising of arising, you would have to accept it generates that arising of arising.

Again, if, for you, the arising of arising that is now arising and not yet arisen can cause the generation of another primary arising, you would have to accept that it generates the primary arising. As such how could that which is unarisen, and nonexistent, [119] cause the generation of another? Therefore this is nothing but mere speculation.

Objection: Though generation is not caused by another arising, arising itself causes the generation of itself and others. How?

> Just as a light illuminates
> Itself as well as others,
> So too arising causes the generation of itself
> As well as others. (7:8)

Just as a light illuminates itself, it also illuminates other things as well, such as a vase or a cloth. So too arising causes the generation of itself and also it generates other things as well, such as a vase or cloth.

Response: If a light were to illuminate itself and others, then you would have to accept that arising also causes the generation of itself and others, just as a light [illuminates itself and others]. But a light does not illuminate itself and others. Why? Here Nāgārjuna explains:

> There is no darkness
> In light or where it exists. (7:9ab)

Here, that which is not illuminated is something to be illuminated, and something is not illuminated due to being obscured by darkness. But a light devoid of illumination due to that light [being obscured] by darkness does not exist.

Also, it is not reasonable to say "it illuminates others," for there is no darkness in other places [120] where a light exists. Because darkness does not exist there, a lack of illumination does not exist there. But if it does not illuminate itself or others:

> What does a light illuminate? (7:9c)

Please respond!

Objection:

> It illuminates since it eliminates darkness. (7:9d)

Here, the light now arising illuminates, since it [both] eliminates darkness and illuminates. That is because it is said that which eliminates

darkness is light, and it illuminates both itself and others. It has also been said:

> There is no darkness
> In light or where it exists. (7:9ab)

Therefore because light now arising eliminates darkness, darkness does not exist with respect to the light itself or others. It is that which illuminates, because [for it] darkness does not exist. Thus a light illuminates itself and other states because it eliminates darkness. And just as a light [illuminates itself and others], so too it is correct to say that arising causes the generation of itself and others.

Response: Tell me how light now arising eliminates darkness! Nāgārjuna explains:

> How could light now arising
> Eliminate darkness?
> When light is now arising
> It does not contact darkness. (7:10)

When light is now arising, it does not contact darkness because it is impossible that light [121] and darkness exist in the same place. Therefore how could light now arising eliminate darkness, since it does not contact darkness?

> If light were to eliminate darkness
> Without contacting it
> Then all the darkness enduring in the world
> Would be eliminated by its presence. (7:11)

But if light were to eliminate darkness without contacting it, in that case then all the darkness enduring in the world would be eliminated by the presence of this light. But since [all darkness] is the same in not making contact [with this light], how could a difference arise between it eliminating some [darkness] and it not eliminating other [darkness]? Moreover:

> If a light illuminates itself
> As well as others

Then darkness would also undoubtedly
Obscure itself as well as others. (7:12)

Since light exists as the antithesis of darkness, then if light illuminates itself as well as others, it follows that darkness would also undoubtedly obscure itself as well as others. However, darkness does not obscure itself and others. If it were to obscure [itself and others], then darkness itself would not be observed in just the same way others [are not observed].

If darkness is not observed, things would always be illuminated. [122] But since things are not always illuminated, therefore darkness does not obscure both itself and others. That being so, then since light which counters darkness does not illuminate itself and others, so too, like light, it is not correct to declare that arising also generates itself and others.

Moreover, if arising caused the generation of itself, then either that already arisen or that not yet arisen would cause the generation of itself, but neither are tenable. In what way? Nāgārjuna says:

Since that which arises has not yet arisen,
How could it generate itself? (7:13ab)

Since that which arises has not yet arisen and does not yet exist, how could it cause the generation of itself? Again, what would cause the generation of itself, that is something not yet arisen and does not yet exist? But if what is nonexistent generates what is nonexistent, then even the horn of a rabbit would cause the generation of itself, but it does not cause the generation of itself. That being so, that which arises but has not yet arisen does not cause the generation of itself.

But if you think that which is arising generates itself through having arisen, then Nāgārjuna explains:

But if that which has arisen causes the generation [of itself]
What will be generated if it has already arisen? (7:13cd)

If that which arises has already arisen, then it makes no sense to say that it causes the generation of itself, since that which arises has already arisen. Why would something that has already arisen arise again? In that case it is also untenable to say "At times that which has arisen does not cause the generation of itself" and "That which arises causes the generation of another."

As such, that which arises either causes the generation of another [123] which has already arisen or has not yet arisen, or it causes the generation of that now arising. Here Nāgārjuna explains:

> In no way does it cause the generation of
> That which has arisen, that not arisen, or that now arising.
> (7:14ab)

In no way does it cause the generation of that which has arisen. Also, it does not cause the generation of that which has not arisen and that which is now arising. Why?

> This has been explained by where one has
> Gone, not gone, and that being gone over. (7:14cd)

As it was said that "There is no going where one has gone because the act of going has already passed," so too because the action of arising has already passed it does not cause the generation of that which has arisen. Also, the action of arising does not exist for that which has arisen, but if it did exist for that which has already arisen, then it would never not [need to] arise; therefore that is unacceptable. Thus it does not cause the generation of that which has arisen.

Also, it does not cause the generation of that which has not arisen. Why? Because it does not exist. What generation exists for that which has not arisen? If generation exists even though something is nonexistent, then generation would exist even for the horns of a rabbit, but such generation does not occur. As such, it does not cause the generation of that which has not arisen.

Moreover, also it does not cause the generation of that which is now arising because not only is that which has arisen or not yet arisen nonexistent, also that now arising is nonexistent. Otherwise it would then follow that there would be two arisings, "that now arising" due to possessing [arising] and "that causing generation" due to possessing [arising].

Furthermore, is that "now arising" that which has arisen in one part and not arisen in another part, or is it something other which has arisen or not arisen?

If that which has arisen or not arisen causes generation [124] due to that arising, first that which is generated in one part is not generated by that

arising, and that generated is not being generated. Why? Because it is also said, "If it has arisen, it is not that which is now arising, and it does not cause the generation of that which is now arising."

If that which has arisen in one part has arisen solely without arising, then so too the remaining parts would certainly come to arise solely without arising. Also, you must explain the difference between the part of that which has arisen solely without arising, and the part that causes generation by arising.

But if also the part of that which has arisen has been generated solely by that which arises, then arising causes generation of that which has not arisen, but it does not cause generation of that now arising.

Again, that which arises does not cause the generation of that part which has arisen because it has already arisen. Therefore it should be said that that which arises causes the generation of any remaining parts that have not arisen. The assertion that it causes the generation of that now arising thus fails.

But if it causes the generation of the part which has arisen, then it would be qualified by possessing two arisings, but that is not so. Also because it has generated that which has already arisen, it does not initiate any action whatsoever. Therefore it does not cause the generation of anything. That being so, to say "It causes the generation of that now arising" is pointless, and to hold this as an essential point makes no sense.

Objection: Since vases and so on that arise are observed, and since vases and so on that are used for various purposes exist, therefore it may be said that if arising exists, that which now arises is generated in dependence on arising and in reliance on arising.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> When arising exists, that which is now arising occurs.
> When it does not exist, [125]
> How can you say that now arising
> Is generated in dependence on arising? (7:15)

When arising exists that which is now arising occurs, but when it does not exist and it is impossible, how can you say, "That now arising is generated in dependence on arising?"

Objection: How is that impossible?

Response: First, how could cloth be that which now arises in dependence on that which arises?

Objection: The cloth itself is now arising.

Response: If cloth that is in the process of now arising is cloth, what use would there be to say, "That now arising is generated in dependence on that arising"? That is not tenable because there would be no difference between both that which has arisen and that now arising. Therefore, that now arising is not cloth.

Objection: First, that which has arisen is cloth. And for as long as it is not analyzed, then for that long, that which now arises [is generated] in dependence on that which has arisen.

Response: That is true. But how will that which is now arising—that had arisen as something which is not cloth—become cloth? If it now produces something else, it does not become something else. But if that were so, it would become a cloth while it is producing a straw mat, but it doesn't. Therefore that which it becomes is not cloth. If that cloth does not exist, what now arises then in dependence on whose arising?

Objection: Do you claim you are skilled in the use of weapons yet strike your mother [dependent origination]? Or do you criticize the very logic of dependent origination from a desire for disputation?

Response: This is not the logic of dependent origination. For those who advocate dependent origination, things that are now arising do not exist and the arising of things that are now arising does not exist. This is precisely the meaning of dependent origination because Nāgārjuna explains: [126]

> That which is dependent and that which originates
> is free of intrinsic reality. (7:16ab)

Both that which is dependent[99] and that which originates[100] are free[101] of intrinsic reality, devoid of intrinsic reality, and empty of intrinsic reality.

> Therefore, that now arising
> And also arising itself are free [of intrinsic reality]. (7:16cd)

Thus, because both that which is "dependent" and that which "originates" are free of intrinsic reality, devoid of intrinsic reality, and empty of intrinsic reality—therefore for those who advocate dependent origination, both that now arising and that arising itself are free of intrinsic reality, devoid of intrinsic reality, and empty of intrinsic reality. How then could it be possible to say, "Those two which are empty of intrinsic reality generate that now arising in dependence on arising itself"?

Objection: Action is initiated in dependence on causes and conditions because until a thing has arisen for that long it is [actively] generated. Therefore since such action is not initiated in dependence on the arising of just that thing itself, nor is action initiated for that which lacks a basis [or cause], a thing arises in dependence on causes and conditions being activated, and it comes to arise in dependence on their arising.

Response: In dependence on the causes and conditions of what, is action initiated?

Objection: [In dependence on the conditions of] cloth.

Response: Do you gather sky-flowers? Or do you initiate action in dependence on the causes and conditions of nonexistent cloth? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If a thing that had not arisen [127]
> Exists somewhere,
> Then why would it come to arise?
> If it [already] exists, it would not arise. (7:17)

99. That which is dependent (*rten*, *pratītya*).
100. That which originates (*'byung ba*, *bhavati*).
101. This term is rendered here as "free of intrinsic nature" (*ngo bo yid kyis zhi ba*, *śāntaṁ svabhāvataḥ*) instead of a more literal "pacified in terms of an intrinsic nature."

If, prior to arising, a thing that had not arisen exists somewhere, and if such a thing were possible, then it would be suitable to name the causes and conditions of that existent thing, and the actions dependent on them. But when a thing has not arisen and is not tenable in any way, then at that time if a thing is devoid of arising and does not exist, pertaining to what would causes and conditions arise?

Action is initiated and something is generated in dependence on causes and conditions. But if not initiated, it is not generated, so how could it arise? When it does not arise anywhere, how could it come to arise in dependence on that which arises? That being so, the view of those who advocate dependent origination is that both what is now arising, and arising itself, are free [of intrinsic reality]. Moreover:

> If this arising causes the generation
> Of [another] now arising,
> What arising causes
> The generation of that arising? (7:18)

If this arising causes the generation of another now arising, then what arising causes the generation of that arising?

But if you think that another arising causes the generation of this, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If another arising causes the generation of this, [128]
> An infinite regress would ensue. (7:19ab)

If another arising causes the generation of this now arising, then in that case an infinite regress would ensue. Also, since that generated by another and that also being generated by another would reveal an endless process, it is unacceptable.

But if you think that generating another arises solely without [another] arising, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> But if something arises without [another] arising
> Then everything would arise in this way. (7:19cd)

Just as, if that which causes the generation of another has arisen without another generating it, then everything would also arise in this way without

others giving rise to them. What use, then, is this pointless speculation that "What has arisen causes the generation of another," for it serves no purpose. Further, you may think it necessary to offer a more precise proof, such as, "Arising itself arises without another generating it, but other things do not arise without others generating them"; however, this also is unnecessary, for it is pointless to say, "The arising of this generates another that is now arising."

Moreover, if things were to arise, they would arise as something existent or nonexistent. Here Nāgārjuna explains:

> It is not logical that
> What is existent or nonexistent arises. (7:20ab)

Now, it is not logical that what is existent arises because it is pointless to consider that it arises. What use is it for something that already exists to arise again? Also, it is not logical that what is nonexistent arises. Why? Because it is nonexistent. What use is it for it to arise? But if what is nonexistent [129] were to arise, then the horns of a rabbit would also arise. Fault would arise for those whose faults have been eradicated; therefore this is unacceptable. That being so, it is not logical that what is nonexistent arises.

But if you think something that is both existent and nonexistent arises, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> Nor what is both existent and nonexistent. (7:20c)

Nor it is logical that what is both existent and nonexistent [arises]. In what way?

> This was explained earlier. (7:20d)

Previously it was said:

> It is not logical that
> What is existent or nonexistent arises. (7:20ab)

Both existence and nonexistence are refuted by the previous refutation, since these two follow each other. Further, it was already taught in the first chapter that any type of arising regarding that which is existent, nonexistent, or both existent and nonexistent is illogical. Where was that?

Since a phenomenon is not established
As existent, nonexistent, or [both] existent and nonexistent,
How could it have an "establishing cause"?
If that was so, it would be illogical. (1:7)

Moreover Nāgārjuna explains:

For a thing now ceasing,
Arising is not tenable (7:21ab)

Here you state, "It causes the generation of a thing now arising"; therefore a thing that is now arising also comes to cease. Why? Because things possess the characteristic of disintegrating. For a thing now ceasing, arising is not tenable because for that which now arises, it arises through developing, while that which ends does not arise, since it comes to an end due to disintegrating.

But if you think that when something is arising, it will [130] not come to cease, then Nāgārjuna explains:

It is untenable there is a thing
Which is not now ceasing. (7:21cd)

If a thing now arising did not cease, that now arising would not be a thing. Why is that? Because it would not have the characteristics of a thing. Thus since disintegration is taught to be a characteristic of a thing, if it lacks [disintegration], how could it be a thing? If that is so, then the statement "It causes the generation of a thing that is now arising" would fail, and it follows that it would also cause the generation of a nonthing that is now arising. That being so, also to say "It causes the generation of another since it arises" is untenable. But how could that which does not cause the generation of itself cause the generation of another? Thus arising does not exist.

Objection: Endurance exists. Further, since it is not tenable that things have not arisen, also arising is fully established.

Response: If things endure, does that which has endured endure, does that which has not endured endure, or does that which is now enduring endure? In that regard Nāgārjuna explains:

A thing that has endured does not endure.
A thing that has not endured does not endure.
Also that now enduring does not endure. (7:22abc)

First, a thing that has endured[102] does not cause endurance. What use would there be for that which has already endured to endure again? [131] It follows that endurance would be twofold: "that which endures" due to possessing [endurance] and "that causing endurance" due to possessing [endurance]. If that were so, then the one who endures also would be twofold, but that is unacceptable.

Also, a thing that has not endured does not cause endurance. Why? Because the two, that which has endured and that which has not endured, are incompatible.

Also, that now enduring does not cause endurance. Because [anything] that is now enduring that is separate from that which has endured and that which has not endured is impossible. Also, it follows that endurance would be twofold, and the agent as well would be twofold. Moreover:

What other thing that has not arisen causes endurance?
(7:22d)

When it has already been shown that there is no arising due to the previously stated reasoning, then what other thing that has not arisen causes endurance? Furthermore:

It is not tenable that a thing
Now ceasing endures. (7:23ab)

It is not tenable that a thing now ceasing endures. Why? Because the two, enduring and ceasing, are incompatible.

But if you think that when endurance endures, it does not cease, then Nāgārjuna explains:

It is untenable for that which is
Not now ceasing to be a thing. (7:23cd)

102. Endure, enduring (*gnas pa*, *sthita*).

When that which endures is enduring, it is not ceasing; therefore when it endures, it is not a thing. Why? Because it lacks the characteristics [132] of a thing. So too, since disintegration is taught to be a characteristic of a thing, how could it be a thing if it lacks [disintegration]? If things do not exist, by what means do they endure? That being so, the endurance of a thing is not tenable because it is now ceasing. Again:

> When all things always possess
> The properties of aging and death,
> What are those things that endure
> Without aging and death? (7:24)

When all things are related to impermanence, and it is accepted that they possess the properties of aging and death due to being impermanent, at that time, in dependence on what does enduring exist? What are those things that endure without aging and death? That being so, also enduring is not tenable.

Now we shall explain what is called "the endurance of endurance."

> It is not logical that endurance endures
> Due to another or itself enduring. (7:25ab)

It is not logical that endurance is endurance caused by another enduring, nor is it logical that endurance is endurance caused by itself enduring. In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Just as arising is not generated
> By itself or another. (7:25cd) [133]

It was previously said:

> Since that which arises has not yet arisen,
> How could it generate itself?
> But if that which has arisen causes the generation [of itself]
> What will be generated if it has already arisen? (7:13)

So too also endurance is either (1) endurance caused by itself not enduring or (2) endurance caused by itself enduring.

In this regard, first, it is not endurance caused by itself not enduring. Why? Because it does not exist. As such, endurance is untenable for that which has not endured. How could that which does not exist cause its own endurance? But if it does cause such endurance, even the horn of a rabbit itself would cause its own endurance, but this is unacceptable. Hence it is not endurance caused by itself not enduring.

It is not endurance caused by itself enduring. Why? Because it is endurance itself. What use is it for endurance to endure again? Hence, though endurance endures, it does not cause its own endurance. How could that which does not cause endurance endure? Hence it is not endurance caused by itself enduring.

How is it illogical that endurance is caused by another enduring? It was said:

> If another arising causes the generation of this,
> An infinite regress would ensue.
> But if something arises without [another] arising
> Then everything would arise in this way (7:19)

So too endurance is either (1) endurance caused by another enduring or (2) endurance caused without another enduring.

First, in that regard, endurance is not endurance caused by another enduring. If endurance is endurance caused by another enduring, then an infinite regress would ensue. Further, since it is caused by another enduring, [134] and that also is caused by another enduring, this is unacceptable, since it constitutes an infinite regress. That being so, it is illogical that endurance is endurance caused by another enduring.

But if you think that such endurance is endurance caused without another enduring, then we shall respond to this.

Just as endurance caused by another is endurance without another enduring, so too everything endures without another enduring. What use is it to say, "Endurance is caused by another enduring"? This is pointless speculation.

Further, you may think it is necessary to offer a more precise proof, such as, "Endurance itself endures without another enduring, but other things do not endure without others enduring"; however, this also is unnecessary, for endurance is not endurance caused by another. Since that which does not cause endurance does not endure, therefore endurance does not exist.

Objection: Cessation exists. And also arising and enduring are fully established, since it is untenable that things have not arisen and do not endure.

Response: If a thing that is now ceasing exists, then it is that which has ceased, or has not ceased, or is now ceasing. But this is not tenable in any way. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which has ceased does not cause cessation.
> Also that which has not ceased does not cause cessation.
> Also that now ceasing does not cause cessation. (7:26abc)

First, that which has ceased[103] does not cause cessation. Why? Because it does not exist. How would that which does not exist come to cease?

Also, that which has not ceased does not cause cessation. Why? Because "ceased" and "not ceased" are incompatible.

Also, that now ceasing [135] in the same way does not cause cessation. Why? Because it is said "It does not cause the generation of that now arising" therefore in that way that now ceasing, which is separate from that which has ceased and not ceased, is impossible.

Also, it follows that because cessation would be twofold, and that now ceasing would be twofold; therefore that now ceasing does not cause cessation.

Moreover, that "now ceasing" is something that has ceased in one part and not ceased in another part, or otherwise that which has ceased or not ceased with respect to another.

If that which has [partially] ceased and [partially] not ceased causes stoppage due to ceasing, then one part has not yet stopped, since it is ceasing and that which ceases is not now ceasing. Why? Because it is said that if it has ceased, it is not now ceasing, and that now ceasing causes stoppage.

If the part that had ceased had ceased solely without stopping, certainly the remainder also would cease without stopping. Again, you must explain what difference exists between the part that had ceased solely without ceasing and that part that causes cessation due to having ceased.

If the part that has ceased had stopped due to ceasing alone, then that

103. Ceased (*'gags pa*, *nirudhyate*).

which had not ceased would cause cessation through having ceased, but that now ceasing does not cause cessation.

Moreover, the part of it which has ceased does not cause cessation due to that which has ceased, because it has already ceased. Therefore, you would say the remaining [part] that has not ceased causes cessation of that ceased, for the statement "It causes the cessation of that now ceasing" is flawed.

But if a part of it that has ceased causes cessation, then it would be qualified by possessing [136] two cessations, but that which has already ceased does not initiate any action for the purpose of causing something to again cease. Therefore it does not again stop anything. That being the case, the statement "It causes the cessation of that now ceasing" is meaningless, and to hold this as an essential point makes no sense.

Again,

> What thing that has not arisen causes cessation? (7:26d)

When it is said "Not even one part arises" that has been explained already, then at that time it may be said, "What other thing that has not arisen causes cessation?" That being the case, cessation does not exist.

Moreover, cessation either endures or does not endure, but neither is plausible. In that regard Nāgārjuna explains:

> For things that endure
> Cessation is not tenable (7:27ab)

It is not tenable that the action of enduring that has already arisen is ceasing and incompatible with enduring, because it is enduring. This is well understood.

Objection: There is no fault, since that which does not endure ceases!

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> For things that don't endure
> Cessation is not tenable. (7:27cd)

That it is because they do not endure. We think it is like that which has ceased.

Objection: It is well known that the language of logical proofs pales in comparison to direct perception, and even a child perceives that things endure without ceasing and [137] only disintegrate due to various causes. Therefore ceasing surely exists.

Response: That being the case, it is appropriate that it is an object of your perception. Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which endures due to its own state,
> Does not come to cease due to that.
> Its own state does not come to cease
> Due to the state of another. (7:28)

When investigating a thing's own state, then its own state[104] does not come to cease due to its own state. Why? Because its own state exists. So too, milk does not come to cease due to milk's own state because milk's own state exists. Its own state does not come to cease due to the state of another. Why? Because it does not exist with regard to the state of another. As such, milk's own state does not cease when curd's own state exists, for when curd's own state exists, milk's own state does not exist. But if it were to exist, both milk and curd would abide simultaneously, and curd would also occur without a cause. But that is unacceptable because the fact that cessation is untenable is perceptible to mind. Therefore that called "ceasing" should be properly understood as not existing in the least.

Objection: Ceasing surely exists. Why? Because you previously accepted that, for you said earlier, "It is untenable that things now ceasing arise." Therefore ceasing exists because arising derived from any cause ceases. As such, it is untenable that nonthings are causes.

Response: Do you extinguish the picture of a fire? [138] Or do you assert that arising that does not exist ceases? Nāgārjuna explains:

104. Its own state, to abide in its own state (*gnas skabs de*, *avasthā*).

When the arising of any phenomena
Is not tenable,
So too the ceasing of any phenomena
Is not tenable. (7:29)

When we say that the arising of any thing is not tenable, then so too don't we say that the ceasing of any thing is not tenable? How then could a thing that has arisen but [now] does not exist come to cease? That being so, this fully demonstrates that ceasing that stops arising alone is not tenable.

Moreover, if at times ceasing exists, it belongs [either] to an existent thing or a nonthing.

First, it is untenable that
An existent thing ceases. (7:30ab)

First, it is untenable that an existent and enduring thing ceases. Why?

It is not tenable that things
And nonthings are a single entity. (7:30cd)

The existence of an existent thing is an existent thing. The nonexistence of a thing that has ceased is a nonthing. How could it be tenable that things and nonthings that are two mutually incompatible states be a single entity? Therefore, [139] it is not tenable that an existent thing ceases.

Also it is untenable that
A nonthing ceases. (7:31ab)

In what way?

Just as a second head
Cannot be cut off. (7:31cd)

How could something that is nonexistent cease? Thus, just as a second head does not exist, so too it cannot be cut off.

We shall now respond to questions regarding "the cessation of ceasing."

It is illogical that cessation ceases
Due to itself or another (7:32ab)

If the cessation of ceasing exists, it would cease either due to itself or another, but it is illogical that it ceases due to either. In what way?

Just as arising is not generated
By itself or another. (7:32cd)

It was previously said:

Since that which arises has not yet arisen,
How could it generate itself?
But if that which has arisen causes the generation [of itself]
What will be generated if it has already arisen? (7:13)

So too cessation also is either (1) cessation caused by itself, since it has not ceased, or (2) cessation caused by itself, since it has ceased.

If you imagine cessation is caused by itself, since it has not ceased, [140] then how could that be tenable? When it has not yet ceased due to itself not ceasing, how could that which itself does not exist cause cessation, since it is nonexistent?

But if you imagine cessation is caused by itself, since it has ceased, then how could that be tenable? Whatever ceases regarding that which has ceased, and even that itself which has come to cease, does not exist in the least. Thus here it is untenable that cessation is caused by itself, since it has ceased.

Moreover, it is also untenable that it is caused by another, for it was said:

If another arising causes the generation of this,
An infinite regress would ensue.
But if something arises without [another] arising
Then everything would arise in this way (7:19)

So too, regarding cessation, it is either (1) cessation caused by another ceasing or (2) cessation caused without another ceasing.

If that cessation is cessation caused by another ceasing, then there would

be an infinite regress. Furthermore, if cessation is caused by another, and that cessation also is caused by another, there would be an infinite regress, but this is unacceptable. Therefore the cessation of ceasing is untenable.

But if you think that cessation ceases without another, then we shall explain this:

> But if something ceases without [another] ceasing
> Then everything would cease in this way. [variant of 7:19cd]

Just as cessation ceases without another ceasing, so too all things come to cease without another ceasing. But what use, then, is such pointless speculation that "cessation is caused by another ceasing"?

Further, you may think it is necessary to offer more precise proof, such as "Cessation itself ceases without another ceasing, but other things do not cease without others ceasing"; [141] however, this also is unnecessary, therefore it is not tenable that cessation is caused by another ceasing.

Thus, when investigated in this way, arising, enduring, and disintegrating are not tenable in any way. If they are not tenable, how would they be characteristics of conditioned phenomena? That being so, to say that arising, enduring, and disintegrating are the characteristics of conditioned phenomena is mere speculation.

Objection: Though the general characteristics of conditioned phenomena are impossible, surely the specific characteristics of individual conditioned phenomena exist. For example, an ox is marked by the characteristics of the dewlap, the tail, the hump, the hooves, and horns.

Response: Why would we declare that it is good that misconceptions have not arisen in you? Or do you demonstrate the characteristics of conditioned phenomena without including arising, enduring, and disintegrating? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Because those arisen, enduring, and disintegrating,
> Are not established, there are no conditioned phenomena. (7:33ab)

Thus if those which have arisen, are enduring and disintegrating are fully established, are conditioned phenomena also fully established? They are not

fully established because arising, enduring, and disintegrating are not established. Therefore if conditioned phenomena do not exist what would such characteristics pertain to? Because characteristics do not exist, phenomena are not tenable.

Objection: It is not certain that things are fully established from characteristics alone, since things are also established from their antitheses. Since there are unconditioned phenomena that act as antitheses to conditioned phenomena, conditioned phenomena are also established because unconditioned phenomena exist.

Response: Do you search for the sun with a lamp? Or do you assert that conditioned phenomena are established by unconditioned phenomena? [142] Nāgārjuna explains:

> How do unconditioned phenomena establish conditioned phenomena
> Since they are not fully established? (7:33cd)

If you think they are established by their antitheses, then the antithesis of unconditioned phenomena is conditioned phenomena. But since we have already demonstrated they are not established, speak more about how if conditioned phenomena were fully established then unconditioned phenomena would be fully established, and your assertion that conditioned phenomena are established from unconditioned phenomena!

Objection: If for you arising, enduring, and disintegrating are nonexistent, and if conditioned phenomena do not exist, why was it said:[105] "Alas, formations are impermanent, they possess the properties of arising and disintegrating"?

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

105. In the *Vinaya-kṣudraka-vastu* (D 6, vol. 11: 44523).

Just like a dream, like an illusion,
And like a city of gandharvas,
So too they are described as arising,
Enduring, and disintegrating. (7:34)

Just as one may refer to that seen in a dream, or an illusion that is created, or a city of gandharvas that have arisen, endured, and disintegrated—those have not arisen, endured, or disintegrated in the least. So too the Bhagavān has indeed described the arising, enduring, and disintegrating of conditioned phenomena. However, that which causes arising, that which causes enduring, and that which causes destruction do not exist in the least. So too the Bhagavān taught that phenomena are selfless, with examples such as the illusion, the echo, the reflection, the mirage, the dream, water bubbles, and the plantain trunk. Suchness, [143] or unmistaken suchness, does not exist in the least. It is stated that these are [mere] fabrications and also they are false. It is stated that "all phenomena are selfless" and that called "selflessness" means without intrinsic reality. The term "self" is a term indicating intrinsic reality.

That being so, the words [that describe] the arising, enduring, and disintegrating of conditioned phenomena establish conventional truth.

This is the seventh chapter, called Critique of Arising, Enduring, and Disintegrating.

8. Critique of the Agent and Action

[Abhidharmikas] object: Through your investigation of arising, enduring, and disintegrating, our minds are drawn to listen to emptiness. Therefore the agent and action should now be investigated.

Response: We shall do so according to your wish.

Objection: Here virtuous and nonvirtuous action are extensively taught. Their pleasant and unpleasant results[106] are taught. So too the agent of virtuous and nonvirtuous action is taught, and also just this [being] is taught to be the experiencer of their effects. But if the agent does not exist, then also action is untenable. If actions do not exist, then also their effects are untenable. Thus, since the agent and action exist, it is tenable that all things also are fully established because they exist.

Response: If an agent were to perform an action, he would either be a real agent or an unreal agent, and his action would either be a real action or an unreal action. In this regard Nāgārjuna says: [144]

A real agent
Does not perform a real action.
Also an unreal agent
Does not perform an unreal action. (8:1)

106. This summarizes the theory of action (*las*, *karma*): virtuous (*dge*, *kuśala*) and nonvirtuous (*mi dge*, *akuśala*) acts give rise to pleasant (*yid du 'ong*, *iṣṭa*) and unpleasant (*yid du mi 'ong*, *aniṣṭa*) results.

A real agent does not perform a real action.[107] Also an unreal agent does not perform an unreal action. Why? Nāgārjuna states:

> A real [agent] has no activity.
> An action also has no agent.
> A real [action] has no activity.
> An agent also has no action. (8:2)

Here, one becomes an agent solely through possessing activity because in fact only one who acts is an agent, but one who does not is not [an agent]. Therefore any agent that possesses activity is said to be a real agent, and a real agent has no other activity[108] by which he is said to perform an action. But if he did, he would have two activities, and a single agent does not have two [different] activities. Moreover:

> An action also has no agent. (8:2b)

An action that is considered to exist for an agent who performs no other [action] whatsoever has no agent. Why? Because if an agent performs an action, he becomes the agent of that action. Also, if due to the agent performing that action it becomes associated with that agent, then when devoid of activity because the agent does not perform that action, it thus follows that [145] the action would have no agent.

So too a real action has no activity. Here only that which possesses activity becomes an action because in fact activity alone is action and nonactivity is not. Therefore any action that possesses activity is said to be a real action, for that real action has no other activity due to which it becomes an activity. But if it does, it would have two activities, but one action does not have two activities. Moreover:

> An agent also has no action. (8:2d)

107. A real agent (*byed po yin par gyur pa, sadbhūta kāraka*) does not perform a real action (*las su gyur pa, sadbhūta karma*).
108. An agent possesses that activity (*bya ba, kriyā*) by performing that action (*las, karma*).

An agent that is considered to exist for an action devoid of activity also has no action.[109] Why? Because the activity of an agent is the action of that agent, and if that agent becomes associated with action due to the activity of that action, that action would not be the activity of that agent when devoid of activity. Thus, it follows that the agent has no action.

Hence because it has no activity, it follows that the action also has no agent. Since it also follows that the agent would have no action, a real agent does not perform a real action.

Also, an unreal agent does not perform an unreal action. In what way?

> If an unreal agent
> Performed an unreal action
> It follows that the action would have no cause
> Also the agent would have no cause. (8:3)

An agent and action that are "unreal" are devoid of any activity. In that regard, if an unreal agent devoid of activity performed an unreal action [146] devoid of activity, it follows that the agent and the action would have no cause. Why? Because, in fact, the agent who possesses an action is an agent arising from a cause, and that action is the action itself. Thus if one thinks that an unreal agent and action are devoid of activity, it follows they would lack a cause.

In that case, no one would be an unreal agent and nothing would be an unreal action. But then it would be impossible to state, "This is an agent, this is an action." If these [statements] are impossible, then also it would be untenable to state, "This one produces merit" and "This one does not," "This one commits evil" and "This one does not." Since if these [statements] are untenable, great confusion would ensue, therefore an unreal agent does not perform an unreal action. Further:

> If there is no cause, the effect and
> The cause as well would be untenable. (8:4ab)

If there is no cause, also the effect would be completely untenable. How could an effect be tenable for a cause that does not exist? But if it were

109. One devoid of action (*las med, akarmaka*).

tenable, everything would arise spontaneously and all endeavor would also be pointless. Yet this is unacceptable and one should not assert this. Hence, if the cause does not exist, an effect is not tenable in the least. It is said:

> The cause as well would be untenable. (8:4b)

And this ultimately means that if the cause does not exist, then also conditions would be untenable. But how can this be possible? If conditions benefit things derived from causes, then what would conditions benefit if causes do not exist and do not arise? If they don't [147] benefit [something], how could they be conditions? Thus, if there is no cause, also the effect would not be tenable, and therefore the cause as well would be untenable.

> If that [effect] does not exist, then activity,
> The agent, and instrument would be untenable. (8:4cd)

"If that does not exist" refers to nonexistence, where if the effect does not exist then also activity, the agent, and the instrument[110] would be untenable. In what way? Here, when an object to be cut is cut, the cutter cuts it by cutting. When the effect, that is, the object to be cut, exists, then the cut object exists; the agent who will cut it, the cutter, also exists; furthermore, that cutter cuts with a cutting instrument. If the effect, that is, the object cut, does not exist, then how could the cut object exist without a basis [or cause]? If the cut object does not exist, how could the agent of that, the cutter, exist? If the cutter does not exist, how could the cutting instrument exist?

> If activity and so on are not possible,
> Virtue and nonvirtue would not exist (8:5ab)

If it follows that activity and so on are not possible, then virtue and nonvirtue[111] also would not exist. Why? Here it is said that the specific actions of body, speech, and mind that are virtuous or nonvirtuous are dependent on

110. The three parts of an action are: activity (*bya ba, kriyā*), agent (*byed pa po, kartā*), and instrument (*byed pa, kāraṇa*).

111. Dharma and its opposite here represent virtue, morality, or ethical conduct (*chos, dharma*) or nonvirtue, immorality, and unethical conduct (*chos min, adharma*).

the agent and activity. Thus if activity, the agent, and the instrument are not possible, then virtue and nonvirtue that depend on them would not exist.

If virtue and nonvirtue do not exist [148]
The effects derived from them would not exist. (8:5cd)

Hence, if virtue and nonvirtue do not exist, then also it follows that the effects derived from virtue and nonvirtue would not exist. Why? Because results are established from virtue and nonvirtue just as a grain crop grows from seeds and so on. Because activity and so on are not feasible, virtue and nonvirtue do not exist. Since they do not exist, how could an effect derived from them exist?

If effects do not exist then the path for attaining
Liberation and higher rebirth would not be tenable (8:6ab)

If it follows that effects do not exist, then also the path for attaining higher rebirth and liberation[112] would not be tenable. Why? Higher rebirth and the liberation of enlightenment are the results of virtue. If the path is the means of obtaining them, and if the results of higher rebirth and the liberation of enlightenment do not exist, what path would be the means of obtaining them?

Also in consequence
All activities would be pointless. (8:6cd)

In consequence, not only would the path of higher rebirth and the liberation of enlightenment be untenable, since there are no effects, it also follows that all worldly activities, such as farming, would be pointless. If those in the world initiate various activities in order [to reap] the results [of those activities], and if those effects are untenable and nonexistent, it follows [such activities] are pointless, since those engaged in such activities would be exhausted by [needless] fatigue.

112. Higher rebirth (*mtho ris*, *svarga*) and liberation (*thar pa*, *mokṣa*) signify the mundane and transcendent outcomes of the virtuous path.

Therefore, [149] in that case, since numerous errors would ensue if causes do not exist, it is an insult [to one's intelligence] to say, "An unreal agent performs an unreal action."

But if you think a real and unreal agent performs a real and unreal action, then Nāgārjuna responds:

> A real and unreal agent
> Does not perform a real and unreal action. (8:7ab)

A real and unreal agent does not [both] possess and not possess activity; a real and unreal action does not [both] possess and not possess activity; and a real and unreal agent does not perform a real and unreal action.[113] Why?

> How could that which is real and unreal
> Exist as a single [entity] since they are mutually contradictory?
> (8:7cd)

If things such as the agent and action were possible, then an agent would perform that action. Thus, because it is impossible and because both errors just mentioned would ensue, how could that which is real and unreal exist as a single [entity], since they are mutually contradictory?

In that case, first the agent and action are untenable [when formulated] as three compatible theses:[114]

> (1) A real agent does not perform a real action
> (2) An unreal agent does not perform an unreal action
> (3) A real and unreal agent does not perform a [150] real and unreal action.

Also, they are untenable when [formulated as] incompatible theses. Thus:

113. An agent that is both real (*byed pa por gyur*, *kāraka sadbhūta*) and unreal (*byed pa por ma gyur*, *kāraka asadbhūta*) cannot perform an action that is both real (*gyur*, *sat*) and unreal (*ma gyur*, *asat*).

114. Here compatible theses (*phyogs mthun pa*) refer to theses where the subject and predicate are both formulated as real states or as unreal states, whereas incompatible theses (*phyogs mi mthun*) refer to theses where the subject and predicate are formulated differently as either real or unreal or vice versa.

Regarding the agent and action,
A real agent does not perform an unreal action.
An unreal agent does not perform a real action. (8:8abc)

First, a real agent does not perform an unreal action, and an unreal agent does not perform a real action. Why? In this case:

Here also those errors would arise. (8:8d)

If one considers an agent and action to be like that, then here also those former errors [would apply:] a real agent has no activity, an action has no agent, a real action has no activity, the agent and action do not exist, and agents and actions which are unreal have no cause.

Therefore a real agent does not perform an unreal action and an unreal agent does not perform a real action.

Regarding the agent and action,
A real agent does not perform an unreal action
Nor a real and unreal action. (8:9abc)

A real agent does not perform an unreal action nor a real and unreal action. Why is that?

Because this was taught in the previous proof. (8:9d) [151]

Because it was taught that a real agent has no activity, and an unreal action has no cause, then how could a real and unreal action:

... Exist as a single [entity] since they are mutually contradictory? (8:7d)

Regarding the agent and action,
An unreal agent does not perform a real action
Nor a real and unreal action. (8:10abc)

An unreal agent does not perform a real action nor a real and unreal action. Why is that?

Because this was taught in the previous proof. (8:10d)

It has been taught that an unreal agent has no cause and an unreal action has no activity; therefore:

How could that which is real and unreal
Exist as a single [entity] since they are mutually contradictory?
(8:7cd)

A real and unreal agent
Does not perform a real and
Unreal action . . . (8:11abc)

A real and unreal agent does not perform a real and unreal action. Why is that?

. . . Here that should also be understood
Through that proof previously taught. (8:11cd) [152]

With respect to the agent, this should be understood by the words:

How could that which is real and unreal
Exist as a single [entity] since they are mutually contradictory?
(8:7cd)

And with respect to action, it is said, "Real action has no activity, and unreal action has no cause."

Thus an agent and an action are untenable [when formulated as] six incompatible theses:

(1) A real agent does not perform an unreal action
(2) An unreal agent does not perform a real action
(3) A real agent does not perform a real and unreal action
(4) An unreal agent does not perform a real and unreal action
(5) A real and unreal agent does not perform a real action
(6) A real and unreal agent does not perform an unreal action

That being so, it is completely untenable to say, "This agent performs this action."

Objection: What use is it for me to say, "This agent performs this action" or "He does not perform this action"? If at times the agent exists, then the agent and action exist.

Response: Though you want sesame oil, you search for a *tilaka* tree in the forest. Or though being infatuated by just the names "agent" and "action," you assert an agent who does not act at all, and you assert inactivity is action. But since it is untenable that [the agent or action] possess other activities [or functions], it is certainly pointless to consider they exist. Someone with such an essential nature is not an agent, and something with such an essential nature is also not an action. Therefore here it is appropriate to keep to the facts.

Objection: If in that case neither the agent nor even the action exist, then wouldn't the words spoken by you, "In consequence the error of causelessness would ensue," then apply to you?

Response: No, they would not! We do not say the agent and action do not exist. We refute your proposition regarding their real and unreal activities. [153] We assert that the agent and action are dependent designations.[115] In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> The agent is dependent on the action and
> Also the action arises in dependence
> On the agent itself. Apart from this
> We do not see any way to establish them. (8:12)

The agent is dependent on action, it endures due to action, and the term "agent" is mentally imputed and verbally expressed in reliance on the action. Also, its action arises in dependence on the agent itself, and it is mentally imputed and verbally described as "its action."

115. Dependent designations refers to terms that are imputed interdependently (*brten nas gdags pa, upādāya prajñapti*), such as the goer and going.

Therefore these two are imputed to be dependent things; they are neither established nor not established due to an intrinsic reality. Therefore, since neither are accepted as existent or nonexistent, just this is designated as the middle way path. Apart from this [process of] mental imputation, we do not see any other characteristics that would establish them.

One should understand "appropriation" in that way (8:13a)

One should view "appropriation" as [a term denoting] action.[116] Since wherever [a term denoting action] exists, there multiple agents exist, one should accept that it refers to "the object appropriated" and "the appropriating agent."[117] Thus, just as the agent is imputed in dependence on the action, so too the appropriating agent is imputed in dependence on the object appropriated. Just as the action is imputed in dependence on the agent itself, so too the object appropriated is imputed in dependence on the appropriating agent. Apart from them, no characteristics establishing these two are seen. Why is that?

Because the action and the agent are rejected. (8:13b)

"Rejected" means "negated."[118] "Because" indicates a "formal reason." [154] Since the agent and action were earlier clarified in many ways, then due to these clarifications alone, understand that [any] other characteristics established with respect to the appropriating agent and the object appropriated are also rejected.

Just as (1) a real agent does not perform a real action, (2) an unreal agent does not perform an unreal action, and (3) a real and unreal agent does not perform a real and unreal action because many errors would ensue. So too, (1) a real appropriating agent does not appropriate a real appro-

116. Appropriation or appropriating (*nyer len*, *upādāna*) is regarded as (a term denoting) action (*dngos po*, *bhāva*). Strictly speaking, this term refers to a thing or to becoming, existing, being, and so on. But more broadly it may refer to "action," as demonstrated in the compound "a term denoting a verb" (*bhāvavacana*). Further, a "thing" (*dngos po*) is defined as "that capable of function" (*don byed nus pa*) and implies something capable of action.
117. Appropriation or appropriating (*nyer len*, *upādāna*) also pertains to the object appropriated (*nye bar blangs pa*, *upādeya*) and the appropriating agent (*nye bar len pa po*, *upādātṛ*).
118. "Rejected" (*bsal ba*, *vyutsarga*) means "negated" (*bkag pa*, *pratiṣedha*).

priated object, (2) an unreal appropriating agent does not appropriate an unreal appropriated object, and (3) a real and unreal appropriating agent does not appropriate a real and unreal appropriated object because many errors would ensue. This should also be applied in just the same way to the incompatible theses.

> You should understand agents, actions,
> And all remaining things in the same way. (8:13cd)

You should understand agents, actions, and all remaining things in the same way.

Appropriation is described separately because it is an important topic and forms the subject matter of the following chapters. Thus all remaining things should be understood in terms of cause and effect, parts and wholes, fire and fuel, qualities and those possessing qualities, characteristics and the basis characterized.

[Cause and effect]

(1) A real cause does not generate a real effect.
(2) An unreal cause does not generate an unreal effect.
(3) A real and unreal cause does not generate a real and unreal effect.

Also this should be applied in the same way to all theses, and the errors that ensue should be revealed.

If a cause generates [155] an effect, it is called "real," the opposite of that is unreal. If an effect is generated, it is called "real," the opposite of that is "unreal."

Parts and wholes

(1) A real part does not belong to a real whole.
(2) An unreal part does not belong to an unreal whole.
(3) Real and unreal parts do not belong to a real and unreal whole.

Fire and fuel

(1) Real fire does not burn real fuel.
(2) Unreal fire does not burn unreal fuel.
(3) Real and unreal fires do not burn real and unreal fuel.

Qualities and those possessing qualities

(1) A real quality does not belong to a real possessor of qualities.
(2) An unreal quality does not belong to an unreal possessor of qualities.
(3) Real and unreal qualities do not belong to a real and unreal possessor of qualities.

Characteristics and the basis characterized

(1) A real characteristic does not define a real characterized basis.
(2) An unreal characteristic does not define an unreal characterized basis.
(3) Real and unreal characteristics do not define a real and unreal characterized basis.

Just as the agent is imputed in dependence on the action, also the action is imputed in dependence on the agent.

Also the cause is imputed in dependence on the effect, and the effect is imputed in dependence on the cause; the whole is imputed in dependence on the part, and the part is imputed in dependence on the whole; fire is imputed in dependence on fuel, and fuel is imputed in dependence on fire; the possessor of qualities is imputed in dependence on the quality, and the quality is imputed in dependence on the possessor of qualities; also the basis characterized is imputed in dependence on the characteristic, [156] and the characteristic is imputed in dependence on the basis characterized.

Thus it is untenable that they are established by any other [means] apart from being dependent imputations.

This is the eighth chapter, called Critique of the Agent and Action.

9. *Critique of Appropriator and Appropriated*

Section Four

[Abhidharmikas] object: It was said:

> One should understand "appropriation" in that way. (8:13a)

But this statement should be addressed:

> Some say he who has
> Seeing, hearing, and so on
> As well as feeling and so forth,
> Exists prior to them. (9:1)

The statement ". . . seeing, hearing, and so on" refers to seeing, hearing, and so forth, and some say that an entity [or person] who appropriates seeing, hearing, and so on as well as feeling, and so forth, exists prior to seeing, hearing, and the rest as well as feeling, and the rest. Why is that so?

> If an entity does not exist
> How could seeing and so on arise?
> Therefore, prior to them, [157]
> An established entity exists. (9:2)

If an entity [or person] does not exist, how could seeing and so on arise as things to be appropriated? Therefore, since that is unacceptable, prior to seeing and so on, an established entity[119] who will appropriate such things as

119. An established entity (*dngos po gnas pa, vyavasthita*) refers to the person.

seeing and so on exists. If an appropriator exists, then that which it appropriates exists, as it is designated in reliance on this. What do you say?

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> But an entity who is established prior
> To seeing, hearing, and so on,
> As well as feeling and so forth,
> Is designated due to what? (9:3)

If an entity [or person] is designated as the seer, the hearer, and the feeler due to [possessing] seeing, hearing, and so on, as well as feeling and so forth, then the entity described as the one who appropriates seeing and so on [must] exist prior to seeing and the rest, as well as feeling and the rest. But if this entity imputed [by you] is established in this way, due to what is it designated as existing?

Objection: Even when this [person] lacks seeing and so on, it exists due to being fully established by itself.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If this [person] is established even though
> Seeing and so on do not yet exist,
> Then no doubt they would exist
> Even though this [person] does not exist. (9:4) [158]

If you say this entity [or person] exists as something established by itself and extant even though seeing and so on do not yet exist, then there is no doubt that seeing and so on would exist established by themselves and extant, even though this entity does not exist.

Objection: But if this [person] were to endure when seeing and so on do not yet exist, what fault arises?

Response: Your entire [assertion] would fail. Why? An entity who lacks seeing and so on does not manifest nor does it endure, and if it does not

exist then seeing and so on would not manifest nor would they endure. Because of that, Nāgārjuna explains:

> Someone is made evident by something.
> Something is made evident by someone. (9:5ab)

Someone, that is the seer, the hearer, and the feeler, is made evident by something, such as seeing and so on. The term "makes evident" ultimately means that which makes manifest, that which makes perceptible, and that which makes known. Something such as seeing and so on is also made evident by someone who is an entity that makes evident [such actions as]: "I see this, I hear this, I feel this."

Thus, because of that, the entity [or person] is made evident by seeing and so on, and seeing and so on are made evident by that entity.

> If something does not exist, how could someone exist?
> If someone does not exist, how could something exist? (9:5cd)

If something such as seeing and so on does not exist, how could someone—who is an entity that has not been made evident—exist as something that endures? Also, if someone does not exist, [159] how could something—such as seeing and so on that has not yet been made evident—exist as something that endures? In that case, prior to something such as seeing, someone such as an entity is not established.

Objection:

> Prior to all [sense faculties] such as seeing
> Someone does not exist (9:6ab)

I do not say that prior to all [sense faculties] such as seeing, someone such as an entity exists. Instead [I say] prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing, someone such as an entity exists. Therefore:

> At various times [the person] is made evident
> By different [sense bases] such as seeing and so on. (9:6cd)

[Someone] does not exist prior to all [sense faculties] such as seeing, but [someone] does exist prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing. Therefore, the seer, the hearer, the feeler are made evident at various times by different [sense faculties] such as seeing. Hence it is not that [someone] does not exist prior to seeing and so on, nor that [someone] is not made evident [by them].

Response: This merely demonstrates your weak intellect, for you utter nonsense. Nāgārjuna explains:

> If [the person] does not exist
> Prior to all [sense faculties] such as seeing
> How could [the person] exist prior to [160]
> Each [sense faculty] such as seeing? (9:7)

If [the person] does not exist prior to all [sense faculties] such as seeing, then it is definite [the person] also would not exist prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing. But if [the person] exists prior to each [sense base separately], it is clear [the person] would also exist prior to all [together]. However, when [the person] exists prior to seeing, at that time [the person] doesn't exist prior to hearing and so on. But how could [the person] who does not exist prior to [hearing and so on] relinquish seeing when he does not yet exist, prior to hearing? For he would exist prior to hearing [just as he exists prior to seeing]. Hence, to say he exists prior to each [separately] but does not exist prior to all [together] is senseless. Moreover:

> If [the person] existed prior to each
> He would be the seer, the hearer,
> And also the feeler.
> But that is not possible. (9:8)

If [the person] existed prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing and so on, then in that case he would be the seer, the hearer, and also the feeler. But that is not logical. Why? Because it follows that the self would go to different sense faculties just as a person goes to different windows. But it is unacceptable that a self should proceed to different sense faculties.

But if you think it is incorrect that the self goes to different sense facul-

ties, and therefore you consider that the seer is one [person], the hearer is another, and the feeler is another again, then we will respond to this. [161]

If the seer was one [person]
The hearer another, and the feeler another again,
And the hearer exists at the time of the seer,
There would also be many selves. (9:9)

If the seer was one [person], the hearer another, and the feeler also another again, then in that case the hearer and feeler would also exist at the time of the seer. In what way? Because you assert they [that is, the seer, hearer, and feeler] exist prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing and so on. Since you say, "For us the seer is one [person], the hearer another, and the feeler another again," thus it follows there would also be many selves.

But if they are different, if the hearer and feeler did not exist when the seer [exists], then in that case that is unacceptable, since it follows that the self would be impermanent, and the self would be multiple! That being so, it would be illogical to say, "[The person] exists prior to each [sense faculty] such as seeing," and "seeing and so on are made manifest by each different [sense faculty]."

Objection: The self exists prior to seeing and so on. Why? Here, the six sense bases are said [to arise] due to the condition of name and form. Since that called "form" is the four primary elements, therefore the six sense bases arise due to the condition of the primary elements. Also those primary elements are appropriated states of the self. Thus if the appropriator of the primary elements is established as a self, and made manifest by the primary elements, then since feeling and so forth arise in sequence after the six sense bases have arisen, it is acceptable to say that an entity [person] is established prior to seeing [162] and so on.

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

That [person] does not exist in
Seeing, hearing, and so on,
As well as feeling and so forth,
Nor in the primary elements from which they arise. (9:10)

That entity [or person] imputed by you does not exist in those states of seeing and hearing, and so on, as well as feeling, and so forth, nor also does it exist in the primary elements from which they sequentially arise. Why? Because it is the appropriator of the primary elements, and prior to the primary elements, the appropriator of the primary elements is not tenable, since they make manifest [that person].

How could that which does not exist prior to the primary elements act as the appropriator of those primary elements? Hence if that [person] does not exist in those primary elements, how could it exist prior to seeing and so on?

Objection: That [person] may either exist or not exist prior to seeing and so on, but such things as seeing and so on exist. Previously you stated:

> If something does not exist, how could someone exist?
> If someone does not exist, how could something exist? (9:5cd)

Therefore, something such as seeing and so on exists. And if someone did not exist, something would not exist. Therefore someone, such as this entity who has something such as seeing and so on, also exists.

Response: Previously Nāgārjuna stated:

> If someone does not exist, how could something exist? (9:5d)

In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Seeing, hearing, and so on,
> As well as feeling and so forth, [163]
> If they belong to someone who does not exist,
> Then they too do not exist. (9:11)

It was previously taught that prior to something such as seeing and so on, someone such as an entity [person] does not exist. Also it was taught:

> If something does not exist, how could someone exist? (9:5c).

Therefore, if something such as seeing and so on is fully established, and seeing and so on belong to someone who does not exist, how could seeing and so on be fully established? Whose seeing and so on would it be? Hence someone such as that entity [or person] does not exist, and something such as seeing and so on also does not exist. If something such as seeing does not exist, how could someone such as your entity exist?

Objection: Are you completely certain that someone such as this entity does not exist?

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> Someone does not exist prior to
> Seeing and so on, at the same time, or after.
> This refutes the conception that
> This [person] exists or does not exist. (9:12)

If you search every temporal possibility regarding whether someone [exists] prior to seeing and so on, or together at the same time as seeing and so on, or after seeing [has ceased], and so on, then you cannot establish that "[the person] exists at this [time]!" This refutes the conception that this [person] exists or does not exist, due to seeing and so on. Because at times [the person] is not established, how could you say, "He exists"? Or, because [the person] is made evident by seeing and so on, how could you say, [164] "He does not exist"? Therefore, it is untenable to conceive that he exists or does not exist. That being so, the agent and action, and also the appropriator, are merely mentally imputed. Not only that, other [instances] of established entities [or persons] are untenable.

This is the ninth chapter, called Critique of Appropriator and Appropriated.

10. Critique of Fire and Fuel

[Abhidharmikas] object: That which is the appropriator and that appropriated are established like fire and fuel, but they are not established like an agent and its object,[120] they are not [like them].

Response: If fire and fuel were established, then [an appropriator and that appropriated] would also be established; but if fire and fuel were not established in just the way an agent and object [are established], then how would the appropriator and that appropriated be established? If fire and fuel were established by their own intrinsic reality, then they would be established as the same or different, but neither [position] is tenable. In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If fuel were fire
> The agent and object would be identical. (10:1ab)

If you conceive that fuel itself were fire, then in that case it follows the agent and the object would be identical.[121] But it would then be impossible to state, "Fire is [the agent] that burns [fuel]." Yet if it were possible [to say] that even though they are identical, then it would also be possible to say, "Fire is [the agent] which burns," [165] and "Fuel is the object burned." But that is impossible; therefore, it is not tenable that these two are identical. Yet if you think that fuel is different from fire, then Nāgārjuna explains:

120. Object (*las, karman*) is often translated as "action." But here the opponent asserts fire (*me, agni*) is the agent (*byed pa po, kāraka*) that burns, and fuel (*bud shing, indhana*) is the object (*las, karman*) that is burned.
121. Identical (*gcig, ekatva*) here refers to a single state.

If fire were different from fuel
It would arise even without fuel. (10:1cd)

If fire were different from fuel, then fire would arise even without fuel and completely apart from fuel. But it is untenable that they are different, since fire does not arise without fuel. Moreover:

It would burn eternally
And arise without a cause to ignite it.
As such setting [a fire] would be pointless
And fire would lack an object. (10:2)

If fire were absolutely different from fuel, it would burn eternally because it would arise without a cause to ignite it. Any cause that ignites it is a cause that makes it burn. But if [fire] lacks a cause to ignite it, it would arise without a cause to make it burn. This means that fire would arise in the complete absence of something to ignite it. As such, setting [a fire] would also be pointless, and fire would lack an object, for it could not be demonstrated that "fire" [possesses] an object, that is, "an object to be burned."

Objection: How can you say that fire arises without a cause to ignite it? [166]

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

Because it does not rely on another,
It would arise without a cause to ignite it. (10:3ab)

Because if fire is distinct from fuel, it follows it would arise even without fuel, and therefore it would not rely on another. Thus if fire relies on fuel, it relies on another, but since fuel does not exist, [fire] does not rely on another. Because it does not rely on another, it would arise without a cause to ignite it. But if [fire] were to arise without a cause to ignite it, it follows it would burn eternally. Thus if fire arises in reliance on what ignites it, then when that which ignites it does not exist, [the fire] would die. But since even that which ignites it does not exist, it also follows that fire burns eternally.

If it were to burn eternally
Setting [a fire] would be pointless. (10:3cd)

If fire were to burn eternally, setting a fire—through collecting [fuel], igniting it, and so on—would be pointless. In that case it follows that [fire] would have no object. But since that possibility is untenable, it follows that fire is nonexistent.

In this regard if one says
That which is being burned is fuel, (10:4ab)

In this regard if one says [fire and fuel] are different because fuel is something pervaded by fire and something which is being burned by fire, and errors raised [by us] such as the consequence that "Fire would have no fuel" do not apply [167] since fire does not lack fuel but has fuel, then we will address this point:

Then if it is [fuel] just at that time,
By what is it burned so that it becomes fuel? (10:4cd)

If it is [fuel] just at that time it is being burned, and also it is not being burned by another [fire] that possesses it [as fuel], then prior to it becoming fuel, by what other so-called "fire" is it pervaded and burned so that it becomes fuel? And at that very time when [fuel] is being burned, is fuel itself fire? Or if you think fire is one thing and fuel another, do you say that only when burning occurs, fuel is that which is pervaded and burned by fire?

But how can it be correct to say this, because when fire pervades it and burns it, it is not that fire lacks fuel. Hence if they are distinct, these errors will ensue and persist. Moreover:

If [fire] is different [from fuel], it will not touch [fuel].
If it does not touch, it will not burn. If it does not burn
It will not perish. If it does not perish
It will endure with its own characteristics. (10:5)

If fire is different [from fuel], it will not touch fuel. If it does not touch [fuel], it will not burn [168] [fuel]. But if [fire] burns even though it does

not touch [fuel], it will burn all beings by [just] existing in one location. Therefore, because of that, it is untenable to say, "Though they are different, when it is burning, it is fuel," since contact is untenable.

If it does not burn, it will not perish. Why? If fire burns fuel, fuel also perishes, since it is consumed. How could perishing through burning arise without a cause? If it does not perish, it will burn eternally, for it would not rely on another [thing], and it will arise without a cause to make it burn. It will endure with its own characteristics as something that exists perpetually. Otherwise [fire] would not be different from fuel.

Objection: I object to your explanation that "If fire is different [from fuel], it will not touch fuel," for:

> Even if fire is different from fuel
> It would be capable of touching fuel. (10:6ab)

If fire is different from fuel, it still would be capable of touching fuel. In what way?

> Just as a female touches a male
> And a male touches a female. (10:6cd)

In response Nāgārjuna explains:

> If fire and fuel
> Preclude each other
> One may assert [fire] touches fuel [169]
> Even though fire is different from fuel. (10:7)

If fire and fuel preclude each other just like being male or female [preclude each other], then one may assert [fire] touches fuel in accordance with your thought that fire is different from fuel, just as a female touches a male and a male touches a female. But when the thought arises that [fuel] is now burning, at that time how could it be tenable for you to say that fire touches fuel?

Objection: Here these two are not the same nor are they different. What-

ever they are, it is easy to understand through logical reasoning that they are not the same nor are they different, for at [specific] times fire and fuel are established.

Response: That [assertion] is laughable, for Nāgārjuna said:

> If they are not established as
> The same phenomenon
> Or different phenomena
> How could these two be established? (2:21)

Objection: Through mutual reliance, fire [arises] in reliance on fuel and fuel arises in reliance on fire.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If fire is reliant on fuel
> And if fuel is reliant on fire,
> Which is established first?
> In reliance on what do fire and fuel arise? (10:8)

If fire is reliant on fuel and fuel is also reliant on fire, then from these two, which is established first? In reliance on what does fire come to arise or fuel come to arise?

But if you think that fuel is established first, and fire is established in reliance on it, [170] then we will respond to this:

> If fire is reliant on fuel,
> Fire already established will again [need to] be established.
> (10:9ab)

If fire arises in reliance on fuel that is established first, then fire that was already established will again [need to] be established. Why? As such it is appropriate that if fire is established, it relies on fuel. But if fire is not established and does not exist, how could it rely on fuel? Therefore, isn't it pointless for you [to imagine] that when fuel does not yet exist, fire relies

on being self-established, only to be established [again] in reliance on fuel? Moreover:

> Also wood that acts as fuel
> Would come to arise without fire. (10:9cd)

Thus also fuel would come to arise without fire. As such if fuel is established, it is tenable that it relies on fire. But if fuel is not established and does not exist, how could it rely on fire? Therefore isn't it pointless for you to imagine that when fire does not yet exist, and in consequence fuel itself [must] be self-established, that [fuel] is reliant on fire?

In fact, it is untenable that either is established in reliance on the other. So too if you imagine that fuel is established in reliance on fire that was established earlier, that [same] error would also apply.

Objection: Do you impute a fault to something I have not said? Or when I said, "They are established in reliance on each other," then just what are you addressing when you state, "Which is established first?" and "If from those two one is established first, then they are not established in reliance on each other"? [171]

Response: If you imagine they are established in reliance on each other though you have already accepted one is established first, it is untenable for them to be established in reliance on each other. In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If one thing is established in reliance [on another]
> And if that [other thing]
> Is also established in reliance on it,
> What is established in reliance on what? (10:10)

If one thing [a] yet to be established is established in reliance on another thing [b], and if that other thing [b]—that is relied upon in order to establish that yet to be established—also is established in reliance on that thing yet to be established [a], then tell me, since you assert [both] are established, what is established in reliance on what?

Have these words uttered by a learned being never reached your ears:

"They rely on each other, but they are not established as reliant on each other"? For example, one boat will not protect another boat tied to it [when both are drifting]. Therefore if this is so, discard your shame and disclose your secret [belief]: "They are established as reliant on each other," or well contemplate this with mental equipoise and then speak.

> If a thing established in reliance [on another]
> Is not yet established, how could it be reliant? (10:11ab)

If a thing described as "a thing established in reliance on another thing" is not yet established and does not exist, how could it be reliant [on another]? Also, how could that which is not established and does not exist be something relied upon? [172]

> But if you say "that [which is] established relies [on another],"
> (10:11c)

If you think only that which is established relies on another, and if it is not established there is no reliance, and if it is established what use is reliance—then we will address this [point]:

> It is illogical that it relies [on another]. (10:11d)

It is illogical to again establish a thing that is [already] established and exists because it is pointless that it relies on another. Why would a thing that is established and [already] exists, rely on another? Also, how could that which is established and exists rely on another?

Hence because it is untenable that those which are established or not established are reliant [on another], it is untenable that fire and fuel are established as reliant. The term "thing" is stated in the context of fire and fuel because fire and fuel are things. Also, it is said below:

> Along with the vase, cloth, and so on. (10:15d)

Therefore the term "thing" is applied because this is the critique of all things.

Fire reliant on fuel does not exist.
Fire not reliant on fuel also does not exist.
Fuel reliant on fire does not exist.
Fuel not reliant on fire also does not exist. (10:12)

Thus, if you investigate reality just as it is in accordance with logical reasoning, then fire reliant on fuel does not exist because it is untenable that fire and fuel that are established rely on [fuel and fire] that are not established. Fire not reliant on fuel also does not exist because [fire] would not rely on another, it would arise without a cause to ignite it, and it would blaze eternally. Fuel reliant on [173] fire also does not exist because it is untenable that fire and fuel that are established rely on [fuel and fire] that are not established. Fuel not reliant on fire also does not exist because how could fuel arise when fire does not yet exist, and it does not burn [fuel]? But if it did, everything would become fuel. Therefore, since that is unacceptable, fuel does not rely on fire.

Fire does not come from another.
Fire also does not exist in fuel. (10:13ab)

Fire does not come from another. Why? That [fire] that you imagine comes from another either is associated with fuel or is not associated with fuel. But if you think that, then since in consequence just those [previous] faults would arise, it is pointless to imagine [fire] comes from another.

Fire also does not exist in fuel. Why? Because [fire] is not observed [in fuel], and [if it was], setting a fire would be pointless. Because [fire's] manifestation and distinction does not pre-exist in [fuel], it follows its effect does not pre-exist in [fuel].

But if you say it is just like sesame seeds and sesame oil, then that is untenable because sesame seeds are flattened and viscous, but sesame oil is observed to be something different.

The remaining statements on fuel are made in accordance with
Where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over.
(10:13cd)

You should understand that also the remaining statements on fuel are

made in accordance with just those means. By what means? By means of "going" not existing where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over. [174] Just as there is no going where one has gone, where one has not gone, or where one [now] goes, so too there is also no burning of fuel that has already burned, not burned, or is now burning. Just as there is no beginning of going where one has gone, where one has not gone, or where one [now] goes, so too there is no beginning of the burning of fuel that has already burned, not burned, or is now burning. Just as it is said that the goer does not go, the nongoer does not go, and the goer and nongoer do not go because they are nonexistent; so too fire that is the burner does not burn, [fire that is] the nonburner does not burn, and the burner and nonburner does not burn, because they do not exist. One should interpret the remaining [statements] in this way also. Nāgārjuna explains:

> Fuel itself is not fire.
> Also there is no fire separate from fuel.
> Fire does not possess fuel.
> Fuel does not exist in fire, nor fire in fuel. (10:14)

First, that which is just fuel itself is not fire because it would erroneously follow that the agent and the object would be the same. Also, there is no fire separate from fuel because it would erroneously follow that [fire] would not rely on another. Fire does not possess fuel. Why? Because this term "possess" may be applied to fire and fuel whether they are the same or different, but either [possibility] has already been negated by those [earlier reasons].

Objection: But this is incorrect because in this world [such descriptions] appear, for in this world statements such as "this fire possesses fuel" [175] or "this fire does not possess fuel" are observed.

Response: Since here we are contemplating the nature of reality, what purpose does it serve if someone says in ordinary conversation: "He possesses a self"?

Also, fuel does not exist in fire like a jujube shrub in a pot, nor also does fire exist in fuel like a lotus in water. Why do they not exist [in that way]? Because the error of difference would ensue. Nāgārjuna explains:

The entire process of the self and
That appropriated is fully explained
Without omission in terms of fire and fuel,
Along with the vase, cloth, and so on. (10:15)

You should understand the untenability of the entire process regarding what is identical and distinct, and the mutual reliance of the self and that appropriated. This is fully explained without omission in terms of fire and fuel, along with the vase, and cloth, and so on.

Thus just as fire and fuel are not identical, it is untenable that they are distinct, and also it is untenable that they are established by mutual reliance. So too the self and that appropriated are not the same, it is untenable that they are different, and also it is untenable that they are established by mutual reliance.

Just as fire does not come from another and it does not exist in fuel, so too the self also does not come from another and it does not exist in that appropriated. Just as fuel itself is not fire, fire also does not exist apart from fuel, fire does not possess fuel, fuel does not exist in fire, and fire does not exist in fuel. So too that appropriated is [176] not the self, the self also does not exist apart from that appropriated, the self does not possess that appropriated, that appropriated does not exist in the self, and the self does not exist in that appropriated.

Just as fire does not burn fuel already burned, nor does it burn that not already burned, nor that now burning; just so fire does not start burning fuel already burned, nor does it start burning that not already burned, nor that now burning; and just so fire does not cause the burner to burn, nor cause the nonburner to burn, nor cause the burner and nonburner to burn. That is because it is nonexistent.

So too the self does not appropriate that appropriated, nor appropriate that not appropriated, nor appropriate that now being appropriated; so also the self does not start appropriating that appropriated, nor does it start appropriating that not appropriated, nor that now being appropriated; and so also the self does not cause the appropriator to appropriate, nor cause the nonappropriator to appropriate, nor cause the appropriator and nonappropriator to appropriate. That is because it does not exist. Earlier it was said:

Along with the vase, cloth, and so on. (10:15d)

Fire and fuel explains the [causal] stages of the self and that appropriated. And along with that it also explains the vase, cloth, and so on. This ultimately means it is the explanation of every [causal] stage without exception of the self and that appropriated, and the vase, cloth, and so on.

The vase and cloth and so on refer to such things as causes and effects, attributes and those possessing attributes, qualities and those possessing qualities, [177] characteristics and those possessing characteristics.

Hence the clay itself is not the vase because clay does not make the resultant vase. The vase is not different from the clay because if it did not rely on another, it follows it would be permanent. They are also not established as mutually reliant because it is untenable that that which is established relies on that which is not established.

The leaf is not the tree because it would then follow that when the leaf withers, the tree would be destroyed. The tree is not different from the leaf because if it did not rely on another, it follows it would be permanent. They are also not established as mutually reliant because it is untenable that that which is established relies on that which is not established.

Dark [green][122] is not the leaf because when dark [green] fades, it follows [the leaf] would not be a leaf. The leaf is not different from dark [green] because when the leaf withers, it follows that dark [green] would still endure. They are also not established as mutually reliant because it is untenable that that which is established relies on that which is not established.

Characteristics are not the basis characterized because that to be established and that which establishes are distinct, and they are distinct in number. The basis characterized is not different from the characteristics because things that are not objects to be characterized are not established. They are also not established as mutually reliant because it is untenable that that which is established relies on that which is not established.

Just as it has been demonstrated that fire does not come from another, also fire does not exist in fuel, fuel itself is not fire, fire does not exist apart from fuel, fire does not possess fuel, fuel does not exist in fire, and fire does not exist in fuel; so too also an effect does not come from another, also the effect does not exist in its cause, the cause is not its effect, an effect does not

122. Skt. *nīla* (Tib. *sngon po*) usually means "blue," "indigo," "black," or "dark." It is strange here that it is applied to a leaf. Skt. *śyāma* (Tib. *ljang ku*) has the same issue of varying between dark green and black. In Tibetan *rtsa sngon po* is green grass.

exist apart from its cause, [178] an effect does not possess its cause, the cause does not exist in its effect, and the effect does not exist in its cause. So too this should be applied in the same way to everything.

Therefore, if it is untenable that a self and things are [established] by their own intrinsic reality in any respect, then those [who assert] this lack critical insight yet pride themselves on being scholars. Nāgārjuna explains:

> We do not think those who teach
> Identicality and distinction
> Regarding the self and things
> Are learned in the meaning of the Teaching. (10:16)

We do not think those who teach identicality and distinction regarding the self, and identicality and distinction regarding things, are learned in the meaning of the Teaching.

The term "identicality" means "with that nature."[123] "A thing with that nature" means "with that nature alone." "A thing with the nature of that self" means "that with the nature of that self." "A thing with the nature of things" means "that with the nature of things themselves." This ultimately means that with a nature imputed as selves or things refers to just those selves or things, for they are not distinct.

Thus, [they teach] that which is imputed to be the self due to what is appropriated—that has the nature of being appropriated—is the self, but it is not only that. They teach that any thing with the nature of being appropriated has the nature of the self.

They teach that prior to seeing [179] and so on that are distinct from the self, some entity [or self] exists.

So too, in terms of things, they teach that that which has the nature of fuel itself—that is designated as fire[wood] due to being fuel—is fire, but it is not only that. They teach that any thing with the nature of fuel has the nature of fire.

So too, also a leaf that possesses qualities. If it has qualities with the nature of green, and so on, it is a leaf. But they teach it is not only that.

123. "With that nature" and "identicality" (Tib. *de bcas nyid*, Skt. *satattva*) are different ways of translating the same term.

So too, also resultant cloth. If it has the nature of causal thread, it is an effect. But they teach it is not only that.

So too, also a body with limbs. If it has limbs with the nature of hands and so on, it possesses limbs. But they teach it is not only that.

So too, also an ox that is a basis of characteristics. If it has characteristics with the nature of horns, and so on, it is a basis of the characteristics [that is an ox]. But they teach it is not only that.

They teach that things are distinct: fire and fuel are mutually distinct; a leaf that possesses qualities and green that is a quality are mutually distinct; resultant cloth and causal thread are mutually distinct; a body that possesses limbs and a hand that is a limb are mutually distinct; an ox that possesses characteristics and characteristics such as horns are mutually distinct.

But we do not regard those who teach such things as learned. Why? It may be asked whether a thing with that [quality] is a thing that is identical to or [180] distinct from that very [quality] it has?

Both are untenable because this has already been taught in a previous verse. Also, the chapter on Attachment and One Who Is Attached extensively teaches:

> A single entity is not coexistent. (6:4a)

Therefore this refutes coexistence.

This is the tenth chapter, called the Critique of Fire and Fuel.

11. Critique of Samsara

[Some Abhidharmikas] object: The self definitely exists. Why? Because samsara exists. The Bhagavān has stated:

> For children who do not know the holy Dharma
> Samsara lasts for a long time.

So too, he advised:

> Monks, that being so, you should strive and train in this way for the purpose of eliminating samsara.

Therefore samsara exists because [the Buddha] taught samsara lasts for a long time, and he taught one should strive to eliminate it. If it did not exist, why would he state it lasts for a long time and should be eliminated? Hence, since he stated it lasts long and should be eliminated, samsara exists. And if samsara exists, then also samsaric beings exist. Why? Because it is called samsara, since it is the passage through a succession of states and the one who passes through such states is the self. Therefore the self definitely exists.

Response: Do you see the honey but not the abyss? Or if you have seen the statement that samsara long endures and should be eliminated, why have you not seen this other instruction given by the Bhagavān? [181] Nāgārjuna explains:

> When asked whether he saw an initial beginning
> The Great Sage said "No."
> Samsara has no first or last [phase].
> It has no initial beginning or final end. (11:1)

The Bhagavān, the omniscient, all-seeing Great Sage declared:

> Monks, samsara has no first or last [phase]. I do not see an initial beginning.

Since he stated [samsara] has no first or last [phase], the Bhagavān also taught samsara to be empty of [intrinsic] reality.

Thus if a thing called "samsara" existed, then without doubt it would have a first and also a last [phase]. As such, how could existent things have no first or last [phase]? That being so, [the Buddha] said that samsara endures long and should be eliminated in order to conform with conventional speech. But it was in conformity with the teaching on ultimate truth that the Bhagavān stated:

> It has no initial beginning or final end. (11:1d)

Hence, since he stated that [samsara] has no first and last [phase], a thing called "samsara" is completely untenable. If [samsara] does not exist, then how could a samsaric being be tenable?

Objection: Though a first and last [phase] of samsara have been refuted, samsara definitely exists, since a middle [phase] exists and this has not been refuted. How could a thing not exist yet still have a middle? That being so, samsara definitely exists because its middle exists. And because samsara exists, also samsaric beings exist.

Response: If samsara had a middle, then it would exist, just because its middle exists. But since its middle is untenable, [182] how could samsara exist because its middle exists? Nāgārjuna states:

> How could that which has no beginning
> Or end have a middle? (11:2ab)

How could that which has no beginning or end have a middle? Thus if the middle were established in reliance on a beginning and end, yet a begin-

ning and end do not exist, how could a middle exist between them when they do not exist? Master Āryadeva also said:[124]

> A beginning, middle, and end do not exist
> And prior to arising they are impossible.
> Except in terms of the other two
> How else could each arise? [xv:5]

Nāgārjuna continues:

> Therefore the order of earlier,
> Later, or simultaneous is untenable. (11:2cd)

Therefore, the order of earlier, later, or simultaneous is impossible. As such, because samsara has no beginning, middle, or end, therefore the birth or aging and death of a samsaric being here [in this world] would also lack the order of earlier, later, or simultaneous. In what way?

> If birth were to occur earlier
> And aging and death later
> Birth would occur without aging and death
> And birth would occur even without dying. (11:3)

If birth were to occur earlier, and then later, aging and death were to arise in sequence, in that case birth would occur without aging and death. If it occurs without aging and death, then later, [183] from what would aging and death arise? But if they do occur, it follows that aging and death would have no basis [or cause]. Even if they made contact with [birth,] they would not transform [birth] in any way because there is no aging and death due to [possessing] an intrinsic reality.

Moreover, birth would occur even without dying, and in that case if you examine birth that occurs earlier, then it follows that one who had not died

124. CŚ, xv:5. TCE (p. 182): *thog ma dbus dang tha ma med, skye ba'i snga rol mi srid de, gnyis gnyis dag ni ma gtogs par, re res rtsom par ji ltar 'gyur*. Derge (D 3846: 16b1): *thog ma bar dang tha ma rnams, skye ba'i snga rol srid ma yin, gnyis gnyis dag ni med pa ru, ji ltar re re rtsom par 'gyur*.

elsewhere would be born here. In that case samsara would possess a beginning. But since that is untenable, therefore birth that occurs earlier, and aging and death that occur later, is untenable.

But if you think that such error is implausible, and aging and death occur earlier and birth occurs later, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If birth occurs later
> And aging and death occur earlier,
> Aging and death would be without birth,
> But how could they arise without a cause? (11:4)

If [a being's] aging and death occur earlier and birth occurs later, in that case aging and death would be without a basis, since it follows they would lack a cause. But that is unacceptable. As such, aging and death would lack birth and be without birth, but how could [aging and death] arise without a basis and without a cause? One who has been born and exists is properly described as one who will age and die. Furthermore, it is untenable that birth occurs later and aging and death occur earlier.

Objection: They do not occur earlier or later, for birth definitely arises in a concurrent relation with aging and death.

In response Nāgārjuna says:

> It is untenable that birth,
> And aging and death, occur simultaneously. (11:5ab)

It is untenable that birth, and aging and death, occur simultaneously. But why is that?

> The one being born would die, [184]
> And both would be causeless. (11:5cd)

If birth, and aging and death, occurred simultaneously, then the one being born would die. But that also is untenable for how could arising and ceasing, which are two incompatible states, occur at the same time?

Moreover, both would be causeless for if birth, and aging and death, were

to occur simultaneously, then death would not precede one's birth, and in consequence one's birth would precede [death]. But if [birth] occurred earlier, then it follows it would be causeless. Master *Āryābhaya says:[125]

If the body arises from karma,
And karma does not exist apart from the body,
Then due to what cause would it arise
If it does not arise from the karma of an earlier body?

Thus if they arise simultaneously, and one's aging and death do not rely on birth, then it follows they would be established by themselves, aging and death would be nonexistent, and they would be causeless. But this is unacceptable, because numerous errors would ensue. Accordingly it is untenable that birth, and aging and death, occur simultaneously.

Therefore, here, in your imagined samsara, the order of birth, and aging and death, occurring earlier, later, or simultaneously is impossible. If [this order] doesn't exist, then what self— that is devoid of birth, and aging and death—courses in samsara?

Objection: Whether the order of earlier, later, or simultaneous exists or not, if it exists, then birth, and aging and death, will exist from time to time. Since they do not lack a basis, they definitely belong to someone. And since that someone who exists is the self, the self definitely exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

Their order as earlier, later,
Or simultaneous is impossible. [185]
Why do you speculate that this is birth
And that is aging and death? (11:6)

Thus, if you examine this with that prior logical reasoning, then in terms of birth, and aging and death, their order as earlier, later, or simultaneous is impossible and does not exist. Why do you speculate that "This is birth" and

125. Neither the author *'phag pa 'jigs med* (*Āryābhaya) nor the passage cited here have yet been identified.

"That is aging and death"? If some [instances of] birth, or aging and death, existed, they would certainly be earlier, later, or simultaneous. But for those [instances] about which you say "Birth, and aging and death, exist," the order of earlier, later, and simultaneous do not exist. Therefore who would state, "They endure due to their essential nature," and who would maintain that thought? Hence [the links of] birth and aging and death are untenable. If they don't exist, how could it be tenable for the self to exist? Therefore, see the assertion of a self to be illogical. [So too:]

> Cause and effect,
> Characteristics and the basis of those characteristics,
> Feelings and the feeler, and
> Any suitable object. (11:7)

When investigated in this way, the order of earlier, later, and simultaneous is untenable for birth, and aging and death. So too for cause and effect, characteristics and the basis of those characteristics, feelings and the feeler, and any other suitable object, such as the liberated being and nirvana, knowledge and objects of knowledge, valid cognition and objects of valid cognition, and so on. The order of earlier, later, and simultaneous is untenable for all such objects of investigation. In what way?

First, [186] if the effect occurs earlier and the cause later, then the effect would not possess a cause. If the effect [already] exists, what then would its cause do? In consequence, it would be pointless to investigate its cause.

But if the cause occurs earlier and the effect later, that would also be untenable, since the cause would not possess an effect. In fact, if its effect does not exist, how could it become a cause? But if it did become [a cause], then it would never not be a cause.

Yet if the cause and effect occur simultaneously, then just these errors would arise, for definitely neither would possess a cause nor rely on an effect. But this is untenable, since they would then be self-established.

So too, if characteristics occur earlier and the basis of those characteristics occurs later, then when the basis of those characteristics has not yet arisen, what would they be characteristics of? If they are called "characteristics" since they characterize something, then the basis of those characteristics that is characterized by them would also be nonexistent, since those [characteristics] have not yet arisen. But if they do not exist, they do not

characterize [their basis,] so how could they arise as characteristics? Yet if the basis of those characteristics occurs earlier and the characteristics occur later, then that is untenable, since it follows the basis of those characteristics would have no characteristics. How could a thing lacking characteristics exist? But if it exists, then even the horns of a rabbit would exist.

Also, it would be pointless to investigate characteristics, for if you assert they are characteristics because they establish the basis of those characteristics, and if the basis of those characteristics is also established in the absence of characteristics, then what would those characteristics do?

But if the characteristics and the basis of those characteristics occur simultaneously, then just these errors would also arise, for neither would possess a cause. And since the basis of those characteristics would not rely on characteristics, it would definitely be self-established, [187] but this also is not tenable.

So too, if the feeler occurs earlier and feelings occur later, then when feelings do not yet exist and have not arisen, who, as the feeler, would arise? If the one who generates feeling is the feeler, and [here] such feeling has not yet arisen, then if it does not exist, how could one generate feeling? And if one does not generate feeling, how could a feeler arise? But if that arises, then everything would become a feeler of every pleasure and pain without making contact, but this is untenable.

But if feelings occur earlier and the feeler occurs later, then since feeling would occur when one does not generate feelings, that also is untenable. How could feeling arise in one who does not generate feeling? But if it arose, one would never be devoid of feelings at any time or place, but this also is untenable.

But if you imagine feelings and the feeler arise simultaneously, then just these errors would also arise, for neither would possess a cause. And since the feeler would never rely on feelings, he would definitely be self-established when feeling is not generated. And since feelings would never rely on the feeler, they would be self-established when no one generates feeling. But this also is not tenable.

So too, if nirvana occurs before the liberated being then an afflicted being would attain nirvana. As such, no one would attain nirvana, but that is also untenable.

But if nirvana occurs after the liberated being, then one who has not obtained nirvana would be liberated. In that case all those who have not

obtained nirvana would be liberated, and it would be pointless to enter nirvana after being liberated. [188] But if it is said, "Nirvana has not arisen and does not occur," then if it did not occur earlier but occurs later, this would be similar to birth, and that is unacceptable.

Yet if both the liberated being and nirvana are viewed as occurring simultaneously, then just these errors would also arise for neither would possess a cause. And definitely the liberated being would not rely on nirvana, and he would be self-established. Definitely nirvana would not rely on a liberated being, and it would be self-established. But that is untenable.

So too knowledge and objects of knowledge, valid cognition and objects of valid cognition, and so on should also be viewed in that way.

> Not only does samsara
> Not have an initial beginning
> But also all things
> Lack an initial beginning. (11:8)

As such, if we examine perfect reality as it is, then it is untenable that the order of earlier, later, or simultaneous occurs for all things. Therefore, not only does samsara not have an initial beginning, but also all that are asserted to be things lack an initial beginning. Therefore that which appears to be a thing is like an illusion, a mirage, a city of gandharvas, and a reflection.

This is the eleventh chapter, called the Critique of Samsara. [189]

12. *Critique of Suffering*

Section Five

[Some Abhidharmikas] object: The self definitely exists. Why? Because suffering exists. In this world everyone understands that the arising of the body and the sense faculties is suffering. The Bhagavān also said:

> In brief, the five appropriated aggregates[126] are suffering.

Therefore suffering exists. But since it is illogical that suffering exists without a basis, one who has suffering also exists. And since the one who has suffering is the self, therefore the self definitely exists.

Response: But only if suffering is tenable would the self also exist. Yet since suffering is not tenable, how could there be a self? In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Some assert suffering is self-produced,
> Produced by another, produced by both,
> Or it arises without a cause.
> But it cannot be a product. (12:1)

Among those who assert [the existence of] suffering, some assert suffering is self-produced, some assert suffering is produced by another, some assert it is produced by both itself and another, and some assert it definitely

126. The term appropriation (*nye len, upādāna*) as in "aggregates of appropriation" (*nye len gyi phung po, upādānaskandha*) has been translated here as "appropriated aggregates." Here an adjectival past participle is used in place of its present tense form since the act of appropriation (past life) preceded the aggregates (current life). For example, "a person of refinement" may be called "a refined person," since the refinement occurred earlier in the same life.

arises spontaneously without a cause. Thus because suffering for those who assert it is produced by itself, another, or both, it is something produced by itself, another, or both, it then follows it is a product of itself, another, or both. But it cannot be a product, for it is illogical that suffering [190] is a product of them. Why? If suffering is self-produced, then either (1) existent [suffering] or (2) nonexistent [suffering] would be produced. First, if you imagine that existent suffering is self-produced, that is illogical, for what need is there to produce suffering that already exists? But if it is being produced, it does not yet exist. Any existent suffering that is produced by itself either arises without a cause, or if produced by itself then, in consequence, there would be an infinite regress, but that is unacceptable.

But if you imagine that nonexistent suffering is self-produced, then how could that which is nonexistent be self-produced? If it did, then a rabbit with horns would produce itself! Thus, first, it is illogical that suffering is self-produced.

If suffering is not produced and nonexistent, how could another exist [that produces it]? Because another definitely does not exist, it is illogical that suffering is produced by another. Due to that, it is said that production by itself or another is definitely illogical. Moreover:

> If it were produced by itself,
> Then it would not be dependent,
> Because those aggregates will arise
> In dependence on these aggregates. (12:2)

If suffering were produced by itself, in that case it would not be dependent. Yet it does arise dependently because those future aggregates will arise in dependence on these current aggregates. And the Bhagavān also said that [the link of] name and form is conditioned by [the link of] consciousness [191]. If suffering produces itself, it would not arise due to the power of causes and conditions; therefore it is illogical that suffering is produced by itself.

Objection: It is just so, suffering is not self-produced, thus suffering is produced by another. How? Because those [future] aggregates arise in dependence on the transformation of these [current] aggregates.

Response: Suffering is not produced by another. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> If these are distinct from those,
> And those are distinct from these,
> Then suffering will be produced by another
> Since those will be produced by these that are other. (12:3)

If these current aggregates are distinct from those future aggregates, and if those future aggregates are distinct from these current aggregates, then in that case suffering will be produced by another, since those other future aggregates will be produced by these current aggregates that are other. However, these [current aggregates] are not distinct from those [future aggregates,] nor are those distinct from these.

But if you wonder how they are not distinct [from each other], then this will be explained below:

> It is untenable that something
> Dependent on another is different from it. (14:5cd)

Thus it is untenable that suffering is produced by another.

Objection: I do not say that because suffering itself produces [192] suffering, suffering is self-produced. I do not say that because suffering arises from causes and conditions, suffering is produced by another. I do say that because suffering is produced by the person, at times suffering is self-produced. I do say that because suffering is produced by another person, suffering is produced by another.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If suffering is produced by the person himself,
> Who then is that person
> Who is devoid of suffering
> By whom suffering is self-produced? (12:4)

If you say the suffering of the aggregates is produced by the person himself, then can you tell me who is that person who is devoid of suffering—since his aggregates are free of suffering and [suffering] does not manifest [in them]—by whom suffering is self-produced?

As such, how could a specific person—whose aggregates lack suffering, suffering does not manifest [in him], and he is not designated [as one who suffers]—produce suffering? Therefore it is illogical to say that suffering is produced by the person himself.

But if you say that suffering is produced by another person, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If suffering arises from another person,
> Then how can this [person] [193]
> On whom the suffering produced by another
> Is bestowed lack suffering? (12:5)

If the suffering of these aggregates is produced by another person, and after producing it, that [suffering] is bestowed on [this person], how can you say this person on whom the suffering produced by another is bestowed lacks suffering, is free from suffering, and [is one for whom suffering] absolutely does not manifest?

Thus, if the appropriated [aggregates] are absolutely nonexistent and if [the person] designated upon them also does not exist, and even [suffering] which does not manifest is held to exist for this [person], how can [another person] produce this suffering? If the appropriated [aggregates] are absolutely nonexistent and utterly impossible, how could suffering produced by another [person] come to exist in this [person]? But you boldly declare "suffering is produced by another"! Moreover:

> How could suffering be produced by another
> Since that which is self-produced is not established? (12:6ab)

If you say "suffering is self-produced" and that is fully established, and therefore it is also tenable to say "suffering is produced by another," then [first] "suffering that is self-produced" is not established. Since suffering that is self-produced is not established, how could suffering be produced by another? Why?

What suffering produced by another
Is self-produced by that other? (12:6cd)

If that suffering produced by another is self-produced by that other [person], [194] it would not be produced by another. But if that [suffering] is not self-produced by that [other person], how could one's own [suffering] be produced by another? Therefore it follows that self-produced [suffering] would belong to another. But it has already been shown that suffering produced by another is untenable. Therefore, if self-produced suffering does not exist since self-produced suffering is not established, how could suffering be produced by another? What suffering is produced by what other [being]? Thus it is also illogical to state, "Suffering is produced by other persons."

Objection: Do you impute fault to my words by applying a meaning to them that conforms to your own ideas, without comprehending the intention of the one who expressed them? I do not say [suffering] is self-produced, and I do not say it is produced by another. Therefore, for that reason, I do say [suffering] is produced by the person himself because sometimes suffering is produced by the person himself. Since that person is not other than that suffering, I say suffering is self-produced because suffering produces suffering. Since suffering is not that person, I also say that suffering is produced by another.

Response: Do you pour water on a tree whose roots are rotting? Or do you say that suffering is produced by the person himself when it is utterly untenable that a person is established as an isolated [entity] devoid of the appropriated [aggregates]? In fact, if a person were established as an isolated [entity] devoid of the appropriated [aggregates], then it would be logical to say that suffering is produced by the person himself. But a person as an isolated [entity] devoid of the appropriated [aggregates] is utterly impossible. Since it does not exist, then Nāgārjuna states: [195]

Suffering is not self-produced. (12:7a)

If a person as a solitary [entity] devoid of the appropriated [aggregates] does not exist, then suffering is not self-produced, since suffering is not produced by the person himself.

But you may say, "Since the person is not different from suffering and

because suffering produces suffering, then from these categories [of proof] suffering is self-produced." To all such statements Nāgārjuna responds:

> It is not produced by itself. (12:7b)

Hence suffering is not produced by suffering itself. Why? Because you have said that [the person] is not different from the suffering experienced, and that which is not different from the appropriated [aggregates] never produces it, but that itself produces just this suffering of the appropriated [aggregates].

Because you said, "He is not different from that produced," therefore that person as a solitary [entity] devoid of the appropriated [aggregates] does not produce it. Thus [to say] suffering is produced by just that suffering itself is illogical.

But if you say that since suffering is not a person, suffering is produced by another, then Nāgārjuna responds:

> If another is not self-produced
> How could suffering be produced by another? (12:7cd)

If the person is not self-produced and the self is not established, and if suffering is absolutely nonexistent and does not exist, how could suffering be produced by another, since another is not self-established?

If the appropriated [aggregates] [196] do not arise and are nonexistent, then how could the person exist as something different? Thus we have answered all these [questions] before, but you continue to entertain different ideas and restate them in different words.

Objection: I have already [accepted] it is illogical that suffering is self-produced or produced by another, but suffering is produced by self and others combined.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Only if it were produced by each
> Could suffering be produced by both. (12:8ab)

Only if it were produced by each could suffering come to be produced by both. But we have already indicated it is illogical that suffering is produced

by each. If suffering is not produced by each how could it be tenable that suffering is produced by both? When a solitary [person] devoid of suffering [produced] from either itself or another is impossible, at that time how could his suffering be produced by both? Therefore, it is also untenable to state "suffering is produced by both itself and another."

Objection: If suffering is not produced by each, and it is illogical it is produced by both, then suffering arises without a cause, since it is not produced by itself, by another, or by both.

Nāgārjuna explains:

> Not other-produced, not self-produced,
> How could suffering be without a cause? (12:8cd)

"Other-produced" refers to that produced by another, and it ultimately means "another produces it." Not other-produced refers to another not producing it. "Self-produced" refers to [197] that produced by itself, and it ultimately means "it itself produces it." Not self-produced refers to itself not producing it. Not other-produced and not self-produced refer to not produced by another and not produced by itself. Thus if it were not produced by [itself] or another, how could it be tenable that suffering arises spontaneously? But if it were to arise [spontaneously], then [suffering] would arise everywhere eternally. If that were so, all endeavor would be pointless, and since the fault of great confusion would ensue, this cannot be accepted. Therefore to say that suffering arises without a cause is unsound.

Objection: If therefore suffering does not exist, why did the Bhagavān say:[127]

> Kāshyapa, suffering exists, I know suffering, I see suffering?

Response: We did not say "suffering does not exist"! Did Nāgārjuna not say:

> Then it would not be dependent. (12:2b)

127. Cited in Maudgalyāyana. *Presentation on Karma.* D 4088: vol. 139, 221a5.

Therefore, we say suffering arises dependently. We do not say it is self-produced, or other-produced, or produced by both, or produced without a cause!

> Not only does suffering
> Not exist in these four ways,
> Also external objects
> Do not exist in these four ways. (12:9)

Not only does the suffering of the aggregates not exist nor is it perceived in these four ways—(1) self-produced, (2) other-produced, (3) produced by both, and (4) arising without a cause—also external objects such as form and so on do not exist in these [198] four ways.

Why? First, form is not self-produced. If form produces itself, it would produce that which is [either] existent or nonexistent. First, if form exists, what need is there to produce it? But if form does not exist, how could that which is nonexistent produce itself? But if it did produce [itself], then a city of gandharvas would construct its own ramparts. If form is self-produced, it would be untenable to say that form arises dependently, but this is unacceptable.

But if you think form is produced by the primary elements that are different from it, then that is incorrect. Why? Because form is not different from the primary elements which are the cause of form. This is also stated below:

> It is untenable that something
> Dependent on another is different from it. (14:5cd)

But how could those which are derived from form, which is unproduced, unarisen, and nonexistent, become distinct?

Form is also not produced by both because it is untenable that it is produced by each. Also, form is not produced without a cause. How could that which is not other-produced, nor self-produced, arise without a cause? Otherwise, in consequence, numerous faults would arise.

So too, since it is unacceptable that any things such as sound exist in these four ways, well examine how things are established.

This is the twelfth chapter, called the Critique of Suffering. [199]

13. Critique of Formations[128]

[Abhidharmikas] object: Suffering exists and also external things exist, but it is completely untenable they exist in these four ways. Though they don't exist in these four ways, still things are established.

Response: Do you assert that an illusory elephant moves, or do you imagine that things not produced in these four ways exist in reality? Here you should consider the logic upholding reality itself.

Objection: What is reality here?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Deceptive phenomena are false.
> This was stated by the Bhagavān.
> All formations are deceptive phenomena.
> Therefore they are false. (13:1)

Here the Bhagavān has stated in one sūtra:[129]

> Deceptive phenomena are false. Monks, it is just so. A phenomenon that is nondeceptive is nirvana, and it is the supreme truth.

128. TCE lists two different chapter titles. In the table of contents (Tib. *dkar chag*; TCE p. xxxv) the chapter is titled Critique of Formations (*'du byed brtags pa*). But at the end of the chapter (TCE p. 206) it is called Critique of Reality (*de kho no nyid brtag pa*).
129. This same verse from an unidentified sūtra was cited by Nāgārjuna in his ABh (*Freedom from All Fear*; D 3829: 58a3).

So too, he also stated the lines:[130]

> There is one truth, there is no second.

Furthermore, he also declared in another [sūtra]:[131]

> Conditioned states are also deceptive phenomena. They are also phenomena that fully disintegrate.

This states that all formations are deceptive phenomena. Since all formations are deceptive phenomena, therefore all of them are false. But how could [things] which are false be established? Your statement that "things are established" is made out of clinging.

Objection: If all formations are false, then would not the statement "In terms of the way they are apprehended, all things are nonexistent" [200] not clarify [the issue]?

Response: It would not. Nāgārjuna explains:

> If deceptive phenomena
> Are false, what is deceptive?
> The Bhagavān stated this
> And elucidated emptiness. (13:2)

If those called "deceptive phenomena" are false, but you say "Deceptive phenomena are nonexistent," then please state what nonexistent deceptive phenomenon is deceptive. How could something nonexistent be deceptive?

Yet even though [existent things] are deceptive, still thieves harm the wealth of a Pāshupata [one who worships Shiva] and a Nigrantha [a follower of Mahāvīra]. In fact, when [the Buddha] stated "They are false," he did not teach that things are nonexistent.

130. A similar verse from an unidentified sūtra was cited by Asaṅga in his *Compendium of Ascertainment* (D 4038: 17a3).
131. This same verse from an unidentified sūtra was cited by Bhāvaviveka in his *Lamp of Wisdom* (D 3853: 147b6).

The Bhagavān, who has attained realization and liberation that is free from obscuration, who sees [things] perfectly just as they are, has stated, "Deceptive phenomena are false," and elucidated emptiness that is the very nature of things, that is not comprehended by any non-Buddhist, that is free from the faults of existence and nonexistence.

Objection: In stating "they are false," the Bhagavān did not teach the nature of things to be emptiness; instead he meant:

> Things have no intrinsic reality,
> Because they are seen to transform. (13:3ab)

By making the statement "they are false," he did not teach only that things [201] have no intrinsic reality, he [also] taught [that they are false] because things are seen to transform,[132] they are seen to change, and they are seen to have a nature that definitely does not endure. Why?

> Things that lack intrinsic reality do not exist.
> This is the emptiness of things. (13:3cd)

Things that lack intrinsic reality do not exist. This also teaches the emptiness of things. Therefore, because the intrinsic reality of things certainly does not endure, because they are seen to transform, understand this to be the meaning of the statement "Things have no intrinsic reality." It is certainly the only way this should be understood. Otherwise:

> If they have no intrinsic reality
> What is it that transforms? (13:4ab)

If things definitely have no intrinsic reality, what is it that transforms? If "transformation" is the opposite of intrinsic reality, and if intrinsic reality definitely does not exist, then undoubtedly transformation would not exist. But since transformation exists, intrinsic reality also definitely exists.

132. Transform (*gzhan du 'gyur ba*, *anyathābhāva*) here means to become other, to change, to be impermanent.

Response: Consider the statement:

> If they have intrinsic reality
> What is it that transforms? (variant of 13:4ab)

Nāgārjuna explains:

> If they have intrinsic reality
> How could they transform? (13:4cd) [202]

If things have intrinsic reality, they would exist without relying on others, they would be self-established, permanent, and unchanging; how could they transform? Because transformation relies on others, [things] change, but those with intrinsic reality do not. Therefore, it is untenable that those with intrinsic reality transform.

Objection: If it is untenable that those with intrinsic reality transform, how then could others devoid of intrinsic reality transform?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Transformation does not exist for a thing itself,
> Nor does it also exist for others. (13:5ab)

It is not tenable that transformation exists for that considered to be a thing itself. Nor does transformation also exist for those which are other than that. Why?

> Because a youth does not age,
> And since the aged also do not. (13:5cd)

That called "transformation" refers to aging. Because with regard to aging, one who is now a youth does not experience aging, and since one who is now aged and no longer youthful also does not, therefore a thing itself has no transformation, and other [things] also have none.

But if a youth were to age when young, then both age and youth would exist together. But that is untenable, for how could two incompatible states

exist together? Yet if those already aged were to grow old when already aged, then [203] it would be pointless to investigate aging, for what need is there for those already aged to [again] grow old?

If one who is old were to grow old when already aged, then at that time it may be said, "He would change into what?" And the principle regarding this relates to the thing itself.

Objection: That itself transforms, but that which is other does not change. For example, the nature of milk transforms into curd.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If that [thing] itself transforms
> Milk itself would become curd. (13:6ab)

But if you think that [thing] itself transforms, then it follows that your milk itself would become curd. Why? Because [transformation] pertains to that [thing] itself, and it does not pertain to another. Since you proclaim that the nature of curd arises while it is still milk, therefore it follows that milk itself is just curd.

Objection: I do not say that since the nature of milk itself is curd, therefore milk is curd.

Nāgārjuna explains:

> The nature of what thing,
> Other than milk, becomes curd? (13:6cd)

But if you don't say that milk is curd since the nature of milk itself is curd, then the nature of what thing, other than milk, becomes curd? Do you say that the nature of curd itself becomes curd and is curd, or do you say the nature of water becomes curd and water is curd?

Hence it is untenable that that [thing] itself or another transforms into another. Because it is untenable that that [thing] itself or another transforms into another, therefore transformation itself does not exist.

Hence [204] the term "false" teaches the intrinsic reality of things to

be emptiness, but does not teach that intrinsic reality definitely does not endure.

Objection: First, emptiness exists, since if its opposite [or antithesis] does not exist, then it itself cannot exist in the least. Therefore, because emptiness exists, the opposite of emptiness also exists.

Response: Even if you assert a thing is fully established due to its opposite [existing], still it is untenable that it is empty. Why? Because that which is empty does not exist. Nāgārjuna explains:

> If something not empty were to exist,
> Then something empty would also exist.
> If something not empty does not exist,
> How could that which is empty come to exist? (13:7)

If something that is not empty is established, then its opposite—something that is empty—would also exist. But when thoroughly investigated, if it is not tenable that something that is not empty exists and that is not refuted at that time, how could that which is empty come to exist? If that which is empty does not exist, how could we investigate the existence of its opposite, that which is not empty?

Objection: I do not accept what was stated earlier:

> The Bhagavān stated this
> And elucidated emptiness. (13:2)

But now you say:

> If that which is not empty exists
> then something empty would exist. (variant of 13:7ab)

Response: Do not get angry—instead apprehend the logic. Nāgārjuna explains:

The victors proclaimed emptiness
To definitely dispel all [false] views. [205]
Those who view emptiness [as a thing]
Are pronounced to be incurable. (13:8)

In order to benefit reincarnating beings, the victors who see reality as it is and possess the holy [mind] of compassion proclaimed emptiness, for emptiness definitely dispels the sea-monster of all [false] views. Since they proclaim that every sea-monster of false view should be removed, it is untenable that [emptiness] which removes these sea-monsters of false views is itself a thing.

For example, some whose minds are confused entertain the idea that a city of gandharvas is an actual city. But later, when free from confusion, they see [reality] perfectly as it is, and the thought of such a city subsides. But a thing called "stopping the thought of a city" does not exist in the least. Since it does not exist, one is absolutely freed from any conception [of it]. So too for one who sees reality perfectly as it is, that called "emptiness" stops the sea-monsters of false view that things [are real], but a thing called "emptiness" does not exist in the least.

For those who view emptiness as a [real] thing, their eye of wisdom is obscured by the great darkness of ignorance, because [for them] "emptiness" does not apply to that which is merely designated. But the victors, the great physicians who analyze who can be cured or not, pronounce them to be incurable. Why? For those [capable of] conceiving that things do not exist due to their intrinsic reality, "emptiness" is explained to them so they may investigate things in terms of dependent origination and by means of causes and conditions. When the nature of things is fully delineated with the words [206] "Things do not exist due to their intrinsic reality," their conception [that things are real] can be stopped.

For those who conceive that emptiness is a thing, the conception [that things are real] cannot be stopped by any means. For example, if someone says, "Nothing exists" we may say, "Hand me this nothingness." But how could we make them apprehend such nonexistence?

Thus due to that, the victors who possess the ten powers and great compassion have stated we should not entertain such [ideas]. Those who see emptiness as empty, and who see reality itself, establish emptiness.

This is the thirteenth chapter, called the Critique of Reality.

14. Critique of Contact

[Abhidharmikas] object: The intrinsic reality of things is not emptiness, but the intrinsic reality of things exists. Why? Because it is taught that they make contact. In this regard, the Victor has widely proclaimed that the convergence of the three, form, consciousness, and the eye, refers to making contact. So too, sound, consciousness, and the ear, and so on, are the same. Similarly, he has stated that due to the fetters of attachment, anger, and ignorance, one is fettered. For things that have no intrinsic reality, making contact is untenable. How could things that lack intrinsic reality come into contact? Thus it is definite that things have intrinsic reality.

Response: If it were tenable that things made contact, things [207] would have intrinsic reality. But since the convergence of things is untenable, how could their intrinsic reality exist? Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> The three, the object seen,
> Seeing, and the seer,
> Do not make mutual contact
> Either in pairs or all together. (14:1)

The three, the object seen, seeing, and the seer, do not make mutual contact either in pairs or all together. The object seen and also seeing do not make contact. The object seen and the seer do not make contact. Seeing and the seer do not make contact. Also the object seen, seeing, and the seer do not make contact.

> So too attachment, one who is attached, and
> The object of attachment, the remaining

Afflictions, and the remaining bases,
Should be examined in these three ways. (14:2)

Just as the object seen, seeing, and the seer do not make contact either in pairs or together, so too attachment, one who is attached, and the object of attachment also do not make contact either in pairs or all together. Attachment and one who is attached do not make contact. Attachment and the object of attachment do not make contact. One who is attached [208] and the object of attachment also do not make contact. So too, the remaining afflictions, such as aversion and so on, and the remaining bases, such as sound, the ear, the hearer, and so on, do not make contact either in pairs or all together.

Objection: Why do those such as the object seen not make mutual contact?

Nāgārjuna responds:

If contact exists, something [would contact] another.
But because [any mutual] difference
Of the object seen, and so on, does not exist,
Therefore they do not make contact. (14:3)

But if making contact exists, then certainly something [would make contact] with another. But because it is not logical that the object seen, and so on, are distinct, and their mutual difference does not exist, therefore they do not make mutual simultaneous contact.

Not only is difference not [tenable]
For the object seen, and so on, alone,
Difference is untenable for something
together with another. (14:4)

Not only is mutual difference not tenable for the object seen, and so on, alone, difference is untenable for something together with [209] another. If difference does not exist, then something making mutual contact with something else is untenable.

Objection: It is illogical for anyone to say, "The difference between things is not observed with direct perception."

Response: Solely because you say you observe the difference between things with direct perception, then due to that alone we well understand that you do not observe the difference between things. For if the difference between things does not exist, and it cannot be observed even by the divine eye, then what need is there to say it cannot be observed by the flesh eye of one such as yourself? Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which is different is different in dependence on others.
> If others do not exist, others would not be different from it.
> (14:5ab)

That which is different is different in dependence on others that are different from it. If that were not so and others do not exist, others would not be different from it. That which is different is called "different" in dependence on others. But since [others] are not different from it, who could say "Such [difference] is directly perceived"?

Objection: In that case, difference would not be nonexistent, for difference would be fully established.

Response: For the unwise that is so, for the wise that is not so. Nāgārjuna explains:

> It is untenable that something
> Dependent on another is different from it. (14:5cd)

In fact, isn't it untenable to say that something that arises in dependence on another is different from it? Why? [210]

> If something were different from another
> It would be different even without another. (14:6ab)

If something became different in dependence on another and it were different from it, it would be different even without another. In that case, a

vase would be different [from a straw mat] without relying on a straw mat. But a vase is not different [from a straw mat] without relying on a straw mat, for in fact a vase is not different from a straw mat.

Objection: Though it is not different from it, at times difference exists.

Response: Do you agree with the one who refutes you? Or do you intend to use the proof negating difference to establish difference? In the statement "If this is different in dependence on that," if that which arises from it is not different [from it], do you think it is different due to itself alone? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Something different—that is different from another—does not exist.
> Since [another] does not exist, difference does not exist. (14:6cd)

Because something different—that is different from another—does not exist, therefore [another] is not different from it. Since another does not exist, understand that difference definitely does not exist.

Objection: Solely because you said "That which is different is different in dependence on others," (14:5a) then due to that alone, how could you say either difference does not exist, or though dependent, something is different even if it is not different?

Response: Dependent origination is just such a state. Because first, it is said that which is different is different in dependence on another, therefore, by the power of worldly convention, something is called "different." Because if we investigate perfect reality just as it is, [211] then:

> Difference does not exist in what is different
> Nor does it exist in what is not different. (14:7ab)

For what reason is a vase called "different" when compared to a straw mat? It is because it relies on a straw mat, because it depends on a straw mat,

and because [a vase] is not self-established. But difference does not exist in a vase.

Also, for what reason is a vase solely called "not different" when not compared to a straw mat? That is because difference that is neither different nor nondifferent does not exist. Thus we say difference does not exist from the perspective of ultimate [truth]. For that reason also the Bhagavān spoke about the trunk of a plantain tree, because the trunk of a plantain tree is hollow, and no pith-essence is comprehended. He also taught it to be "nothing at all."

Objection: If a vase were not different, then the vase itself would be nondifferent. Since when a different [thing] does not exist, a nondifferent [thing] also cannot exist, therefore difference does exist!

Response: Also [a thing] being different from its antithesis is untenable. Why? Because not being different [from it] is untenable. As such, if something is not different from another, then when analyzed also their difference would be untenable. Nāgārjuna explains:

> If difference does not exist,
> Neither difference nor sameness would exist. (14:7cd)

Now, if difference does not exist, any difference that is the opposite of it does not exist, and sameness also would not exist. If that which is not different does not exist, wouldn't you say that its antithesis would not exist as something other, or would you say something else?

Objection: Something is not distinguished in reliance on what is different, but "difference" is a generic state, and something is different since is possesses [difference].

Response: If it is different due to possessing [212] "difference," then because [difference] is not self-established, isn't it different due to definitely relying on what is different?

Objection: What need is there to say that, since difference definitely resides in what is different alone?

Response: Nāgārjuna said:

> Difference does not exist in what is different. (14:7a)

But to say that difference definitely resides in what is different is illogical, for difference does not exist in what is different. Why? Because he said:

> Nor does it exist in what is not different. (14:7b)

Here, since a vase is not different from itself, difference that is incompatible with nondifference does not exist in it. If difference definitely resides in what is different, a vase would be different from itself, and it would not be nondifferent. But a vase that is different from itself is unacceptable.

Thus because [difference] does not exist as something nondifferent from a vase, therefore it also does not exist as something different [from it]. If [difference] does exist, it would always exist.

But if you think that a vase is different in reliance on cloth, and at that time difference exists in the vase, then in that case it is said that difference would certainly not endure because the nature of that [difference] exists dependently.

The proposition that difference exists as something established and locatable is untenable because it contradicts your own textual system.

Moreover, if two things exist, they may make contact, but if not, they will not. Therefore, first, if a vase is not different due to its own intrinsic reality, how could it be different due to possessing difference? Just as water mixed with milk is not milk, and milk [mixed with water] is not water.

But if a vase is different due to its own intrinsic reality, what need is there to locate another that possesses difference? [213] As such, it is pointless to call something different due to possessing difference and then to say difference certainly resides in another.

Objection: Though it is plausible that difference definitely resides in another, it is also plausible that it does not reside there. Whatever you assert to be the meaning of difference, instances of it do exist.

Response: Do you try to flee on a straw horse or do you try to establish difference through the nonexistence of difference? Nāgārjuna said:

If difference does not exist
Neither difference nor sameness would exist. (14:7cd)

Doesn't this solely demonstrate that if a distinct thing does not exist as different, then neither something that is different nor the same would exist? But if a distinct thing that does not exist were to become distinct, then someone would be an idiot even when idiocy does not exist. But if you don't accept this, then a distinct thing that does not exist would not become distinct.

Therefore, when investigated in this way, how could it be tenable that difference exists in anything? If difference does not exist, then how could [objects] such as the object seen and so on, or attachment and so forth, make mutual simultaneous contact? If making contact does not exist, how could the intrinsic reality of things—that you seek to prove by the reason that they make contact—be tenable?

But if you speculate that [a thing] is distinct as well as being itself, then it is untenable that it makes contact. Why? Because:

It does not make contact with itself.
It is untenable that which is different makes contact with another. (14:8ab)

First, it is not tenable that it makes contact with itself. Why? Because it is just itself [i.e., solitary], and it is untenable that it exists together [with itself]. But if it did, this would be unacceptable, since it does not make contact with anything. As such, it is not tenable that it makes contact with itself. [214]

And also, it is untenable that that which is different also makes contact with another that exists. Why? Because they are surely different. But also, if those that are different make contact, they would never not make contact, but this also is untenable. As such, it is not tenable that those which are different make contact.

Objection: Any two [things] that are different and then merge as one make contact like the pair: milk and water. So too, another does not make contact with another.

Response: Also in that regard, as they reside as milk and water, they are

distinct, and at that time they do not make contact. Why? Because they are separate. But when they merge, then, even at that time, they do not make contact. Why? Because they merge as one.

Objection: When they merge, they make contact.

Response: Did we not explain that if they merged yet still they made contact, then they would never not make contact? Thus your assertion is unsound.

Objection: Those that became distinct, that are now making contact, make contact.

Response: While residing in that state, if things that are now making contact merge, they would also be different. Yet it is untenable that they make contact, because they are different, since this [state illustrates] difference. But if those making contact are said to merge as one, then the words "They are now making contact" are untenable. How could those which have merged make contact?

Objection: Things which make partial contact—that are now making contact—then these make contact.

Response: This also is the same. First, if they make partial contact, and you imagine that all sides make contact since one side makes contact, then that is untenable because they would merge as one.

But if, since something makes contact on one side, it would be differentiated as [possessing] many [sides,] [215] then because it is differentiated as many, how could contact be made?

But if contact is made on one side, and contact is not made on another [side], that [thing] itself would become two [halves]. And because contact made with [each side] is not identical, making contact would not exist. For that which has no contact, there is no contact with another.

Objection: [Establishing] the nonexistence of that which now makes contact is easy. But that which at times makes contact does exist. If making contact exists, then making contact is established because making contact exists.

Response: Alas, great is your cup of expectation! That now making contact is not tenable, starting to make contact also is not tenable, [thus] making contact is never tenable.

When it is said "They merge as one," then at that time if they are one [single thing], how could they make contact? But if they were not one [single thing] yet made contact, then even in that case they would not make contact because they are not different.

Objection: It is easy [to establish] they do not make contact, but at times prior to merging as one, some things exist that are different. There are contactors, and some exist.

Response: Are you jealous of a neuter? Do you assert the existence of an agent who makes contact when contact does not exist?

If by making contact the one who arises from the cause of making contact is the contactor, then contact is entirely untenable. If it doesn't exist, making contact doesn't exist, how then could a contactor exist? Therefore if you investigate reality as it is by applying the previous logic, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> That now making contact, the contact [itself],
> And the contactor do not exist. (14:8cd)

If they don't exist, how could you establish the intrinsic reality of things with your argument for contact!

This is the fourteenth chapter, called the Critique of Contact. [216]

15. *Critique of Things and Nonthings*

[Abhidharmikas] object: Because you do not see things as existent, you think that things have no intrinsic reality; you say that things that are called "dependently arisen" exist, and you also speak of things lacking intrinsic reality. But how could things that arise also lack intrinsic reality? If the intrinsic reality of things did not solely arise from causes and conditions, from what else could it arise? If the intrinsic reality of cloth did not arise from thread alone as its cause, what intrinsic reality of causal thread would in fact arise? But if it does not arise, why say it arises?

Response: Do you not see the horse when you ride a horse? You say things arise dependently, but you do not see their lack of intrinsic reality. Yet at times even those with untrained minds easily understand this. Nāgārjuna explains:

> It is illogical that intrinsic reality
> Arises from causes and conditions. (15:1ab)

In this regard, its own intrinsic reality is called "intrinsic reality," but it is illogical that its own intrinsic reality arises from causes and conditions. Thus if [intrinsic reality] already exists, what action would [causes and conditions] have? If it doesn't exist, what use would [causes and conditions] be? But if it arises from causes and conditions, then: [217]

> Intrinsic reality arisen from
> Causes and conditions would be a product. (15:1cd)

That also is untenable.

Objection: Intrinsic reality is surely a product. Why? Because the thing that is cloth, that did not exist earlier, is produced later.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> How could it be possible
> That intrinsic reality is a product? (15:2ab)

How could it be possible that intrinsic reality is a product? When these [two] objects are contradictory—that is, if something has intrinsic reality it is not a product and if something is a product it has no intrinsic reality—then at that time, who in their right mind would hold that which has intrinsic reality is also a product?

Objection: But what do you think is the logic of intrinsic reality?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Intrinsic reality is not fabricated.
> It is not reliant on others. (15:2cd)

The rationale of intrinsic reality is that it is not established by any action, it is not reliant on causes and conditions, and its own intrinsic reality does not transform. But how could intrinsic reality be tenable, since that which is established by some [means of] production and relies on causes and conditions is dependent on others; and that which is reliant on others is not established by its own self?

Objection: But extrinsic reality that becomes a thing in reliance on something other does exist. If extrinsic reality is established, then also intrinsic reality [218] is established.

Response: Intrinsic reality that depends on its antithesis is not tenable. Why? Because extrinsic reality is not tenable. As Nāgārjuna explains:

> If intrinsic reality does not exist,
> How could extrinsic reality exist? (15:3ab)

If intrinsic reality is established, then extrinsic reality, which is its antithesis, would also exist. But intrinsic reality is not tenable, and if intrinsic reality does not exist, how could extrinsic reality exist? If extrinsic reality does not exist, how could intrinsic reality become the antithesis of it?

Moreover, even an intrinsic reality of another and an extrinsic reality are not different. Why? In this regard:

> The intrinsic reality of another thing
> Is called "extrinsic reality." (15:3cd)

Thus, since that which is the intrinsic reality of another thing is called "extrinsic reality," therefore if the intrinsic reality of another thing definitely does not exist, by what [means] would it come to exist? Therefore, it is not tenable to call the intrinsic reality of another and extrinsic reality "different." In that case, there is no antithesis because they are identical. If antitheses do not exist, how could something be established in dependence on its antithesis?

Objection: What does it matter whether the intrinsic reality of things is said to exist or not? Things exist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> How could a thing exist apart from
> Intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality? [219]
> If intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality exist,
> A thing would be established. (15:4)

If a thing were to exist, then it would have either an intrinsic reality or extrinsic reality. Therefore, if intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality exist, a thing would be established. But when intrinsic reality does not exist and also extrinsic reality does not exist, how then could a thing—that surely cannot be described nor become self or other—exist apart from intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality?

Objection: Thus nonthings that pertain to things exist, and since things do not rely [on what is] nonexistent, therefore things that become nonthings also exist.

Response: Even in that case, it is untenable that things are established. Why? Because nonthings are not established, as Nāgārjuna has already explained:

> How could a thing exist apart from
> Intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality? (15:4ab)

Therefore:

> If things are not established
> Nonthings are not established. (15:5ab)

Didn't we say if things are not established in any way, nonthings are not established? Why?

> People say that a thing
> That transforms is a nonthing. (15:5cd)

In that case, if people say that a thing that transforms is a nonthing, then a thing would not exist, and if it does not exist, what would a nonthing be? [220] If it were nonexistent, how could a thing, which for you is its antithesis, be tenable?

Objection: It is said, "Here one is liberated due to seeing thatness." "Thatness" is the thatness of that thing, which ultimately means the intrinsic reality of that thing. If the intrinsic reality of a thing is nonexistent, then for you seeing thatness would be untenable. But if seeing thatness is nonexistent, how could liberation be tenable? That being so, the view that the intrinsic reality of things is nonexistent is unsound.

Response: Do not grasp this wrongly. Nāgārjuna explains:

> Whoever sees intrinsic reality
> And extrinsic reality, and things
> And nonthings, does not see
> The reality of Buddha's teachings. (15:6)

Whoever sees intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality, and things and nonthings, does not see the reality that is the supremely profound teaching of the Buddha. Due to the dawning sun of dependent origination, we see just as it is the nonexistence of the intrinsic reality of things that appear. Therefore, liberation is tenable for us alone, since we alone see reality. Why? In fact:

> The Bhagavān clearly delineated
> Things and nonthings,
> And in the *Instruction to Kātyāyana* [221]
> He denied both existence and nonexistence. (15:7)

Because the Bhagavān is learned in ultimate reality, he clearly delineated things and nonthings. Therefore in the *Instruction to Kātyāyana Sūtra* he denied both existence and nonexistence.

Whoever views things as existent and nonexistent does not see reality, therefore for them liberation is impossible. But for those of us who apply terminology without conceiving existence and nonexistence, [liberation] is not impossible.

If seeing what exists and what does not exist were seeing reality, then one would never not see reality; therefore that is not reality. Hence the nonexistence of the intrinsic reality of things is reality, and liberation is generated by seeing that alone. Master Āryadeva also states:[133]

> Consciousness is the seed of existence,
> Objects are its object-field.
> When objects are seen to be selfless,
> The seed of existence ceases. (xiv:25)

We should definitely understand it in this way. Otherwise:

> If they existed due to their essential nature
> Then they would not become nonexistent. (15:8ab)

133. See above, p. 195, note 34.

If things existed due to their essential nature [or intrinsic reality], then existence that exists due to its essential nature would not become nonexistent later. Why? In this case:

> It could never be tenable that
> Essential nature transforms. (15:8cd) [222]

Since essential nature is the antithesis of change, therefore it is logical that essential nature is a permanent nontransforming state. But since things are seen to transform, therefore it could never be tenable that they exist due to their essential nature.

Objection: If you understand that the intrinsic reality of things does not exist from seeing their nonexistence, then the [essential] nature of things would not exist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If essential nature does not exist,
> What is it that transforms? (15:9ab)

When it is said "Existence that pertains to things is not existence due to their intrinsic reality," then if the existence of things is not the existence of essential nature, what is it that transforms?

Objection: If the nature of things is seen to be nonexistent and essential nature also does not exist, then it is untenable [to say] things do not exist because the essential nature of anything that becomes nonexistent undoubtedly exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If essential nature exists
> How could transformation be possible? (15:9cd)

Previously it was stated:

It could never be tenable that
Essential nature transforms. (15:8cd)

Did we not explain that the antithesis of change is essential nature, therefore it is logical that essential nature is permanent and unchanging? Because of that, even the nonexistence of things is untenable. It also follows that the view that things exist or do not exist has another error: [223]

"It exists" is adherence to eternalism
"It does not exist" is the view of nihilism.
Therefore, scholars should not dwell in
Existence or nonexistence. (15:10)

It follows that the view that things [are real] or "things exist" is adherence to eternalism, and it follows that the view of nonexistence or "things do not exist" is the view of nihilism. But both are senseless and harmful. Therefore, since it follows that viewing them as existent or nonexistent is the view of eternalism or nihilism, and since they are senseless and harmful, therefore scholars who desire to comprehend reality, and who desire to transcend the dark forest of samsara, should not dwell in existence or nonexistence.

Objection: But if one holds the view of existence and nonexistence, how could the erroneous views of eternalism or nihilism follow?

Nāgārjuna responds:

That which exists due to its intrinsic reality
And does not become nonexistent is eternalism.
That which existed before but does not
Exist now, therefore, is nihilism. (15:11)

In fact, that which affirms [that a thing] exists due to its intrinsic reality and does not become nonexistent later is the view of existence, and from it arises the view of eternalism, since essential nature does not change. A thing existed before, but it does not exist now, is the view that existent things are destroyed; therefore this is the view of nihilism.

Thus, because [224] the view that things exist or do not exist has many faults, therefore the Madhyamaka path is to see [the meaning of] the statement "Things have no intrinsic reality." This alone establishes ultimate [truth].

This is the fifteenth chapter, called Critique of Existence and Nonexistence.

16. Critique of Bondage and Liberation

Section Six

[Abhidharmikas] object: When things and nonthings are not observed, then samsara and nirvana, bondage and liberation, are not in the least tenable. How could that be reality? But if things and nonthings are observed, then everything is tenable, for seeing things and nonthings is seeing reality.

Response: When things and nonthings are observed, nothing is tenable. Why? When those who advocate that things [are real] conceive of things, wouldn't they conceive formations [or formative factors] and sentient beings to be things? When they conceive of them as things, it follows they [conceive them] as permanent or impermanent. In this regard Nāgārjuna explains:

> If it is said that formations cycle,
> The permanent do not cycle
> And the impermanent also do not cycle.
> This point is also the same for sentient beings. (16:1) [225]

Now, if one conceives that formations cycle [in samsara], then this is not tenable. Why?

> The permanent do not cycle
> And the impermanent also do not cycle. (16:1bc)

Now, if formations are permanent, they do not cycle. Why? Because those that are permanent do not change. If [formations] that arise and cease in a continuous stream are called "samsara," then it is untenable that formations

that are permanent and unchanging are instances of arising and destruction. Therefore if formations are permanent, they do not cycle.

If formations are impermanent, they also do not cycle. Thus in this respect since just these formations cease, they do not arise as something else. As such, since it is untenable that those which fully cease cycle [in samsara], therefore even though formations are impermanent, they do not cycle. Thus it is untenable that things designated as formations that are permanent or impermanent cycle.

But if you think that formations do not cycle but beings cycle, then Nāgārjuna said:

> This point is also the same for sentient beings. (16:1d)

Just as it is untenable that formations cycle, this point of instruction is similar for beings also. Thus if one asks whether a being who is permanent or impermanent cycles, then it is untenable that a permanent [being] cycles because [that being] does not change. It is untenable that an impermanent [being] cycles because [such a being] is effortlessly refuted.

Objection: This point is not similar for beings who cycle because sentient beings are not described as different from the aggregates, bases, and elements, and they are not described as permanent or impermanent. Therefore sentient beings who are free from the fault of permanence or impermanence, cycle.

Nāgārjuna responds: [226]

> You say that a being cycles,
> Yet when the aggregates, bases, and elements
> Are examined in five ways, [that being] does not exist.
> Who then cycles? (16:2)

But if you think a being cycles thus [in samsara], then this is utterly untenable. Why? Because if the aggregates, bases, and elements are examined in five ways,[134] [that being] does not exist. That redundant being is like a mechanical deer that is fully fabricated by your imagination; it is not

134. The five ways are stated in terms of the Tathāgata in verse 22:1(abc): "The Tathāgata (1)

observed when the aggregates, bases, and elements are examined in five ways. In what other [way] can something that is not observed when examined in five ways be held to exist? Therefore it is definitely nonexistent. If it does not exist, tell me who then cycles? Moreover:

> If one cycles from [one set of] appropriated [aggregates]
> To [another], existence would be impossible.
> If one has no existence and no appropriated [aggregates]
> What is [the person] and what cycles? (16:3)

When you investigate a being who cycles, then if one cycles from one [set of] appropriated [aggregates] to another [set of] appropriated [aggregates], existence would be impossible. Why? If [a being] is designated as existing due to appropriating [aggregates], then since the appropriation of [aggregates] does not exist when one enters the intermediate state between [discarding old aggregates] and appropriating [new aggregates], by what [means would a being] be designated as existing? Therefore, [227] because one lacks appropriated [aggregates], in consequence, one would not exist. If one has no existence, no appropriated [aggregates], does not manifest, and has no assigned designation, what then is [this person] and what appropriated [aggregates] cycle? When [aggregates] have not been appropriated, also appropriation itself does not exist.

Objection: The intermediate existence definitely possesses appropriated [aggregates]; therefore, such existence is not impossible since [the intermediate existence] takes another existence solely due to possessing appropriated [aggregates].

Response: After discarding these appropriated [aggregates, the person] progresses by appropriating [the aggregates of] the intermediate existence. Then after discarding the appropriated [aggregates] of the intermediate existence, [the person] progresses by appropriating other [aggregates]. Also, between those [two] there is no [intermediate] existence, and that devoid of appropriation continues in that state. Therefore it is untenable that sentient beings cycle [in samsara]. Nāgārjuna explains:

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is not the body, (2) nor different from the body, (3) they [i.e., the aggregates] do not exist in him, (4) nor he in them, and (5) the Tathāgata does not possess a body."

It is utterly untenable that
Formations attain nirvana. (16:4ab)

It is utterly untenable that formations attain nirvana. Why? Because it follows [formations] would be [both] permanent and impermanent. Now if you imagine formations are permanent then what difference would obtaining nirvana make to permanent and unchanging formations? But if it made [a difference] they would be impermanent because they had changed [due to obtaining nirvana]. But if formations are impermanent, then they would cease and become nonexistent because they would possess disintegration. But what then would attain nirvana? Thus it is also untenable that formations attain nirvana.

But if you think that sentient beings attain nirvana, then Nāgārjuna responds [228]:

It is also utterly untenable that
Sentient beings attain nirvana. (16:4cd)

It is also utterly untenable that sentient beings attain nirvana. Why? Because it follows [sentient beings] would be [both] permanent and impermanent. Now if sentient beings are permanent, then permanent and unchanging [sentient beings] who attain nirvana would be devoid of action. Also numerous faults would ensue. But if sentient beings are impermanent, then for those who effortlessly cease due to their impermanence, what use is nirvana, and who would attain it?

But if you think that sentient beings who cannot be described as permanent or impermanent attain nirvana, then that also is incorrect. Why? For those who cannot be described as permanent or impermanent, but who possess appropriated [aggregates, nirvana] is possible, yet for those who lack appropriated [aggregates] it is not possible. But if sentient beings who lack appropriated [aggregates] were to attain nirvana, then why wouldn't those who solely lack appropriated [aggregates] not be described as permanent or impermanent?

But if you think those who lack appropriated [aggregates] should not be described as existent or nonexistent then please explain this, for it may be said: "How could any [sentient being] not described as existent or nonexistent, attain nirvana?"

Objection: One who lacks appropriated [aggregates] cannot be described as existent or nonexistent. Just as, if one who has appropriated [aggregates] exists, that being cannot be described as the same or different [from the aggregates].

Response: For [a being] who lacks appropriated [aggregates] and does not manifest, [229] how would you know that [being] exists? But if that [being] exists, then he would possess appropriated aggregates, since he is known to exist due to having appropriated [aggregates]. Yet liberation is utterly impossible for [one with aggregates].

Objection: But one may think, if you say, "When [a being] lacks appropriated [aggregates], he cannot be described as existent," then how could it be appropriate to say, "How would you know [that being] exists?"

Response: Since [a being]—that can be described and is known to others—is another [being], therefore I said, "How would you know [that being] exists?" I did not say, "How is [that being] described?" [For example] with regard to the horns of a rabbit, one does not reflect on whether they can or cannot be described. Thus it is said they cannot be described because one discards frivolous speech [describing them as existent] even though the mind apprehends [them] as existent.

But if your mind does not ascertain [a being] as existent or nonexistent, why then do you say it cannot be described? To be completely honest, it would be appropriate to say: "It is unknowable." Master Āryadeva said:[135]

> If in the state of liberation a self existed, it would be permanent.
> If it did not exist, it would be impermanent.
> Though a being cannot be described
> Scholars do not take it as unknowable.

Hence it is utterly untenable that sentient beings attain nirvana.

135. TCE (p. 229): *thar la gal te bdag yod rtag, gal te med na mi rtag 'gyur, skyes bu brjod par bya min yang, mkhas pas shes par bya min min.* This verse as worded here is not identified.

> Formations with the attributes of arising and disintegrating,
> Are neither bound nor liberated. (16:5ab)

It is untenable that formations are bound and it is untenable they are liberated. Why? In that case formations with the attributes of arising and disintegrating definitely arise in each moment, and due to that alone they cease and do not endure. How then are they bound or liberated because this is [230] untenable?

Objection: Formations are bound or liberated within a continuum.

Response: If a thing called the "continuum of formations" exists, and it is bound or liberated in accordance with your assertion, then when the cause of the arising and ceasing of the formations is called a "continuum," at that time, what is bound and what is liberated? But even if a thing that is a continuum existed, also in that case how could it be bound or liberated? Because it is a formation, it possesses the attributes of arising and disintegrating, and it certainly does not endure.

But if you think that formations are neither bound nor liberated, but sentient beings are bound or liberated, then Nāgārjuna responds:

> As before, sentient beings also
> Are neither bound nor liberated. (16:5cd)

Also, sentient beings are not bound and they are not liberated. Why is that? As before, in the previous [instance], it was taught that it is untenable that either permanent or impermanent sentient beings attain nirvana. So too here it is neither tenable that sentient beings who are not permanent are bound nor is it tenable that they are liberated. But if they were to become bound or liberated, they would be impermanent because they would change. Sentient beings who are impermanent and who possess the property of ceasing certainly do not endure and cannot be bound or liberated. Thus how could something, which has ceased and does not exist, come to be bound or liberated?

Objection: Any appropriation pertaining to sentient beings is called "bondage" and any stable pacification of appropriation is called "liberation."

Since sentient beings cannot be described as permanent or [231] impermanent, therefore calling those who are free of the error of permanence and impermanence "bound" or "liberated" is tenable.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If appropriation is bondage
> One who has appropriation would not become bound. (16:6ab)

If appropriation is bondage, then first, a sentient being who has appropriation would not become bound. Why? Because [that person] definitely is already bound. Thus if already bound, what need is there to become bound [again]?

But if you think that which lacks appropriation definitely becomes bound, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which lacks appropriation is not bound. (16:6c)

Also, it is not tenable that that which lacks appropriation is bound. Even in that case, how could [a person] who lacks appropriation, who cannot be imputed [to exist], who cannot be designated, and who lacks a manifesting agent come to exist? How could one who is nonexistent become bound by appropriation? Therefore it is untenable that a sentient being who lacks appropriation also is bound by appropriation.

> On what occasion would one become bound? (16:6d)

Otherwise, state on what occasion would your sentient being become bound.

Objection: Appropriation that is bondage first manifests, and due to its acting to bind it is called "bondage." Thus because bondage exists, the object bound also definitely exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

If binding exists prior to being bound,
Then it would rely on binding. [232]
But even that does not exist. (16:7abc)

Moreover, if prior to being bound, binding through appropriation exists, then in accordance with your assertion, it would rely on binding, since it binds through appropriation. But prior to being bound, even that does not exist. Thus how could that not already appropriated come to be appropriated? How could [appropriation] that does not exist prior to being bound come to bind? Thus even appropriation does not bind.

The remainder [are understood] through the presentation of
That gone over, that not gone over, and that being gone over.
(16:7cd)

Those remaining [types of] bondage which are not tenable should be understood through the presentation of that gone over, not gone over, and that being gone over. Just as there is no going on that gone over, that not gone over, and that being gone over, also there is no bondage of that already bound, that not already bound, and that being bound. Just as the beginning of going is not tenable on that gone over, nor on that not gone over, nor also on that being gone over; so too the beginning of bondage of that already bound is not tenable, nor of that not already bound, nor also of that being bound.

Objection: First, liberation is taught by the Bhagavān. The Tathāgata appeared in this world so that reincarnating beings attain liberation; therefore, first, liberation exists. But since liberation does not exist for those without bonds, bondage also surely exists.

Response: If liberation itself were tenable, also being bound would exist. But since liberation is not tenable, how could being bound be tenable? Why? Because [233] Nāgārjuna explains:

First that which is bound is not liberated (16:8a)

Here, first, that which is bound is not liberated. Why? As such, how could it be tenable that anything which is bound, which exists in a state of

bondage, be liberated? But if that which is bound were liberated, then there would be nothing that would not be liberated, but that is unacceptable. Thus, first, that which is bound is not liberated.

Objection: Anything bound which is freed from bondage is liberated.

Response: But it is untenable that that which is bound is freed from bondage because it is surely bound.

Objection: But that freed from bondage is called "liberated."

Nāgārjuna responds:

> That which is not bound also is not liberated. (16:8b)

That which is freed from bondage is definitely not bound. Since that which is not bound is liberated, what use is there to liberate it again? In that case, that which is not bound is not liberated.

Objection: It is well known in the world: "That which was bound is liberated, thus that which was bound will come to be liberated."

Response: Your statement that "It is well known in the world" is properly formulated, because in being well known in the world, it does not refer to the contemplation of the ultimate. Why? Because Nāgārjuna explains:

> If that which was bound was now being liberated,
> That bound and that liberated would be simultaneous. (16:8cd)

If that which was bound was liberated, then it would erroneously follow that [234] both that which was bound which was bound due to possessing bondage, and that which was liberated which was liberated due to possessing liberation, would occur simultaneously. But since it is untenable that both that which was bound and that which was liberated endure at the same [time], therefore to state "That which was bound was liberated" is irrelevant.

Objection: If liberation were untenable in that way, then wouldn't those

who fear samsara think "When will I attain nirvana that is free of appropriation?" and "When will nirvana be mine?" Wouldn't all instruction on obtaining nirvana and everything generated for the purpose of obtaining nirvana be pointless?

Response: Since that is not the means [of obtaining liberation], there is no doubt that it would be pointless to seek [such liberation], or give instruction on [such liberation], or compose works on [such liberation]. How could the thought "I will attain nirvana that is without appropriation!" and the thought "Nirvana will be mine!" be nirvana? When [such thoughts arise], Nāgārjuna explains:

> "Being without appropriation, I will
> Attain nirvana, nirvana will be mine!"
> Those who grasp them in this way
> Do not correctly apprehend appropriation. (16:9)

If that which is the complete pacification of appropriation is called "nirvana," then the root of all appropriation is grasping at "I" and "mine." Therefore, [235] those with conceited minds think: "Being without appropriation, I will attain nirvana!" and "Being without appropriation, nirvana will be mine!" They definitely reside fully maintaining the apprehension of "I" and "mine," but those who grasp "I" and "mine" do not correctly apprehend appropriation. For those with appropriation, how could liberation be tenable? For those without appropriation, who would attain nirvana and whose nirvana would it be? All these constitute craving, and this is generated by ignorance.

Objection: First, samsara and nirvana exist. They exist for some and they are not totally nonexistent. Therefore the being who cycles in samsara and the being who attains nirvana exist. For me this [presentation] is permissible.

Response: Do you guard an empty vessel? Or do you assert samsara and nirvana exist for those for whom being bound and liberated is untenable? Nāgārjuna explains:

Where nirvana is not generated
Nor samsara rejected
What samsara is there?
Also what nirvana is envisioned? (16:10)

Thus, where sentient beings and formations are bound in samsara, samsara is rejected and abandoned. Where nirvana is not generated nor entered, how can that called "samsara" be imputed? If nothing is rejected anywhere, [236] nothing is generated anywhere! What samsara is there? Also what nirvana is envisioned?

Again, there is an alternate meaning. As such, those who strive to end samsara and obtain nirvana do not eliminate and abandon samsara, nor do they generate and enhance nirvana. Why do they impute the unreal to be samsara? Why do they explain freedom from conception to be nirvana?

Thus, for those who affirm existence and nonexistence, then samsara and nirvana or bondage and liberation are not tenable because they [hold] the view of eternalism and nihilism. But for those who advocate dependent origination, then samsara and nirvana, or bondage and liberation, are established.

This is the sixteenth chapter, called the Critique of Bondage and Liberation.

17. Critique of Karma and Its Effect

[Abhidharmikas] object: It is incorrect to say, "Samsara is untenable because in consequence the faults of eternalism and nihilism would apply to it—as they apply to things and nonthings." Why? Because karma and its effects are related. What is karma?

> Any proper restraint of the self,
> Benefiting others, and the mind of love, [237]
> Is Dharma, for they are the seeds of results
> In this and other [lives]. (17:1)

Proper restraint of the self is to engage in properly restraining the self. Benefiting others is to engage in benefiting others. Love arises as friendship and it ultimately means "that which is acquired through cultivation." Alternately, love is love itself and it ultimately means "an affectionate mind." It is a condition [that establishes] the purpose of the self. Any engagement in the proper restraint of the self, engagement in benefiting others, and in the mind of love, is Dharma. It constitutes the seeds of effects, for they are causes of [positive] results in this and other [lives]. As such, the Bhagavān broadly stated that meditating on love has eight benefits, [such as] being liked by others. Also, these three types of karma are Dharma. He taught intention to be the seed, while the body and speech are reliant on it. Thus the Bhagavān has stated: "The mind precedes Dharma."

> The Supreme Sage declared karma
> To be intention and that derived from intention
> And fully proclaimed in various ways
> The different aspects of these karmas. (17:2)

Also, the Supreme Sage, Bhagavān Buddha, has declared in brief that karma has two types: intention that is the seed and that derived [238] from intention that is created later. Also, he fully proclaimed and taught in various ways the different aspects of these two types of karma.

> Here, karma called "intention"
> Is known as mental [karma].
> Karma called "derived from intention"
> Is physical and verbal [karma]. (17:3)

Here karma called "intention" is known as mental [karma]. Karma called "derived from intention" is the action of body or speech which conveys the idea "this has been activated by mind." Just that is physical and verbal [karma,] but that which is not derived from intention is not [physical and verbal karma].

> Speech, movement, and
> Unrestrained nonindicative states,
> Likewise the alternative said to be
> Restrained nonindicative states, (17:4)

> Merit derived from enjoyment,
> Likewise demerit through the same process,
> And intention, constitute seven phenomena
> Clearly asserted to be karma. (17:5)

In this regard (1) "speech" is clearly expressed through letters, and (2) movement is physical motion. [239] Because both are produced by the power of karma, they belong to the path of karma, and here it is said they are counted as karma.

What is called (3) "unrestrained nonindicative states" is known as "nonvirtuous karma." It is considered to be that committed through body or speech fully motivated by a nonvirtuous mind. Beyond that, nonvirtue that has not already been committed by body or speech, and that which gives rise to nonvirtuous [action] alone, is derived from its motivating cause, the nonvirtuous mind. These obtain the name "unrestrained nonindicative states."

Likewise the other, (4) restrained nonindicative states, is known as "virtuous karma." It is considered to be that committed through body or speech fully motivated by a virtuous mind. Beyond that, virtue that has not already been committed by body or speech, and that which gives rise to virtuous [action] alone, is derived from its motivating cause, the virtuous mind. These obtain the name "restrained nonindicative states."

(5) Merit derived from enjoyment refers to merit derived from the cause of enjoyment. "Derived from the cause" means "to follow," "to be subsequently related," and "to enhance a continuum" and refers to merit. Likewise (6) demerit derived from enjoyment also [arises] through the same process, and (7) intention is mental formation itself.

Therefore there are many types of karma and they are subsumed by phenomena such as speech. Hence there are seven phenomena such as speech that are clearly asserted to be karma, that are named karma, and possess the characteristics of karma. Hence samsara is tenable because these seven types of karma are related to their results, and the faults of eternalism and nihilism do not arise. [240]

Response:[136] If [for you] the fault of eternalism and nihilism does not apply to karma itself, then it is not the case that no fault arises, since fault does arise. Because of that, karma itself is untenable and karma and its result being related is also untenable. In what way?

> If it endures until the time of maturation
> That karma would be permanent. (17:6ab)

First, if karma were to endure until the time of its maturation, then since it would also endure at other times, it would thus be permanent. Yet if it is tenable that [karma] is permanent, how could it mature [or come to fruition]?

But if you think it is impossible for such an error to arise—for karma is momentary, and ceases because it is momentary—then it is said:

> If karma ceased, then having ceased
> How could it generate a result? (17:6cd)

136. This view is indicative of upper Abhidharma schools.

If karma ceased and was destroyed because it is momentary, how could it generate a result? But if nonexistent karma were to generate a result, [it would be like] cloth imbued with the fragrant aroma of the zhingpata flower, for when it is destroyed, it is no longer imbued [with such fragrance] because it does not exist. Hence karma that has ceased will also not generate an effect.

That being so, it follows that karma would possess the fault of eternalism and nihilism. But if karma is not tenable, how could karma and its result be related?

Objection: Surely it is tenable that karma and its result are related. Why? Because an effect is established within the stream of its [causal] continuum. In that case, for example: [241]

> Any continuum, such as a sprout and so on,
> Arises from a seed and
> Its effect arises from that. If the seed
> Does not exist, a continuum will also not arise. (17:7)

> Because the continuum arises from the seed,
> The effect arises from its cause,
> And the seed precedes its effect,
> Therefore, [the seed] is neither annihilated nor eternal. (17:8)

In this regard, the seed ceases having generated the cause of the sprout. Any continuum, such as a sprout and so on, arises from a seed, and its effect arises from that continuum. If the seed did not exist, then that continuum, such as the sprout and so on, also will not arise. Because the continuum arises from the seed, its effect arises from its cause, and the seed precedes its effect. Therefore [the seed] is neither annihilated nor eternal. Because the seed does not arise as a continuum that is totally annihilated, and a continuum succeeds it, therefore it is not annihilated. Because the seed ceases and definitely does not endure, therefore it is not eternal.

> Any continuum of mind
> Is derived from intention,
> And from that its effect [arises]. [242]
> If there is no intention also that will not occur. (17:9)

Because the continuum arises from intention,
And the effect arises from the continuum,
Karma precedes the effect.
Therefore [karma] is neither annihilated nor eternal. (17:10)

Any continuum of mind is derived from intention that is described as karma now ceasing, and from that cause its effect arises. If there is no intention, also that continuum of mind will not occur. Because the continuum of mind arises from intention that is described as karma, and the effect arises from the continuum of mind, karma precedes the effect. Therefore [karma] is neither annihilated nor eternal.

Because the continuum of mind arises from intention that is now ceasing, and that intention will not come to cease in every respect, thus this is not nihilism. Because intention ceases and definitely does not endure, this is also not eternalism. Therefore since the continuum establishes an effect in this way, samsara is possible, and the errors of eternalism and nihilism do not apply. Moreover,

The means of establishing the Dharma
Is the ten paths of white action.
Its result in this and other [lives]
Is the five sensory objects. (17:11) [243]

In this regard the Bhagavān taught that the means of establishing Dharma is the paths of the ten virtuous actions. Also, he taught its result is the five sensory objects in this and other [lives]. If karma and its effect were not related, it would be untenable to teach the means of establishing Dharma and also untenable to teach the results of Dharma. But since the Bhagavān taught both, therefore karma and its effect that are related surely exist.

Another objection is raised:[137]

If things exist in accordance with your theory,
Then many gross errors would arise.
In that case this theory
Is not tenable here. (17:12)

137. This view is also indicative of upper Abhidharma schools.

If things exist in accordance with your theory, "Karma and its effect are related in the same way the seed and the [physical] continuum of the sprout are related," then many gross errors would arise. Indeed, you may say whatever you like, but you must state an example. Therefore, since the [physical] continuum of the sprout arises similar in type to its seed, a mango arises from a mango seed, but it does not arise from a neem[138] seed, and a neem fruit arises from a neem tree, but it does not arise from a mango seed. Thus a mango and not a neem fruit arises from a mango tree, and a neem fruit but not a mango arises from a neem tree. Hence the fruit arises from a tree that is similar to it and not from one that is dissimilar to it.

Also, if an effect that arises related to the continuum of mind is similar to that [mind], [244] then the [mental] continuum [or mindstream] of a human would solely arise from the mind of a human, the [mental] continuum of a god would solely arise from the mind of a god, and the [mental] continuum of an animal would solely arise from the mind of an animal. If that were so, then there would be no mixing of reincarnating beings and all endeavor would be pointless. Since here many gross faults would arise, this cannot be accepted.

Various minds arise from specific virtuous, nonvirtuous, obscured, or nonobscured neutral states, and various continua [or mindstreams] arise from various minds. Various karmas arise from various continua, and from various karmas various reincarnating beings arise with distinct caste, clan, location, faculty, color, shape, power, mind, and so on. But since this theory is untenable here, therefore it follows many gross errors would arise.

[Abhidharmikas] respond: But how can [such assertions] be tenable?

> We postulate a theory
> That is tenable here,
> That has been declared by buddhas,
> Pratyekabuddhas, and shrāvakas. (17:13)

What is that?

> Just like debt and a promissory note
> So too karma and its nonexpiration. (17:14ab)

138. The neem tree or *azadirachta indica*.

Karma is momentary, and momentary karma gives rise to nonmomentary phenomena called "unexpired [karma]." View karma to be just like a debt, [245] and so too view the nonexpiration [of karma] to be like a promissory note. For example, though one may use borrowed money, since the lender has a promissory note, his wealth will not be lost and it will be returned to him. So too, though momentary karma has already ceased, since potent states arise from their causes, the effect of the agent's karma will not expire and it will return [to the agent].

Just as the lender will in future regain that wealth, even though he has a promissory note, once used, it cannot be used over and over again. So too, even though [karma] does not expire, once the [karmic] agent has experienced the effect [of that karma], it cannot generate an effect again and again.

There are four types of karma according to realm. (17:14c)

Phenomena that do not expire refers to the four types of karma according to realm: that belonging to the desire realm, that belonging to the form realm, that belonging to the formless realm, and that which is uncontaminated.

Further, by nature it is neutral. (17:14d)

Further, it is by nature neutral, neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous.

It is not eliminated by abandonment.
It is abandoned by meditation alone. (17:15ab)

That [karma which does not expire] is not eliminated by abandonment—as an object abandoned by [the path of] seeing [that sees the truths of] suffering, origin, cessation, and path—for that [karma which does not expire] projects effects in other [realms], and that is abandoned by [the path of] meditation.

Therefore the effect of karma
Is generated by unexpired [karma]. (17:15cd) [246]

Thus, because [unexpired karma] is not eliminated by abandonment as an object abandoned by [the path of] seeing [that sees the truths of]

suffering, and so on, therefore when the effect has been obtained, the effect of karma is generated by unexpired karma alone.

> If that eliminated by abandonment
> And karmic projection were similar,
> In consequence, errors such as the destruction
> Of karma, and so on, would ensue. (17:16)

If that eliminated by abandonment through seeing [the truth of] suffering and so on, and karmic projection were similar in type, then just as [the path of] seeing [that sees] suffering and so on [abandons] its object of abandonment, it would also abandon karma in just that way. But in consequence, errors such as the destruction of karma would ensue.

In that case, if ordinary beings eliminated negative tendencies to be abandoned—through [the path of] seeing [that sees the truth of] suffering, and so on—then they would also eliminate other states, such as the karma of ordinary beings. Otherwise, those who obtain [the path of] seeing would possess the karma of ordinary beings, but those who possess [the path of] seeing cannot be asserted to possess the karma of ordinary beings. In that regard, though they have already eliminated such karma, they maintain the [potential] maturation of karma that has not expired.

Therefore those who obtain [the path of] seeing do not possess the karma of ordinary beings, but [their] karma will not expire because its maturation exists. That being so, eliminating abandonments by seeing [the truth of] suffering and so on is not like the abandonment of karma, for that is eliminated [247] when one passes beyond its result in any other [place]. Karma belonging to the desire realm is abandoned by fully transcending [the desire realm]. [Karma] belonging to the form or formless realms is abandoned by fully transcending the form or formless realms.

> They are born individually
> From any appropriate or inappropriate
> Karma of the same realm,
> When linkage occurs. (17:17)

Those born as unique individuals in this life are born individually from

any unexpired appropriate or inappropriate karma of the same realm, when linkage occurs after all [other karmas] cease.

> Each karma in this life
> That includes all karma of either type
> Arises separately and
> Even when it matures it may endure. (17:18)

Each karma in this life—that includes all unexpired [karma] of either type, intention or the outcome of intention whether virtuous or nonvirtuous—arises separately. And even when it matures, it may endure, for though karma ceases due to the cause that matures it, [its ceasing] is not definite. And even though karma matures fully, for as long as it is not disrupted for that long, it will endure. If it is disrupted, it will cease. But even if it endures [248] it cannot generate a [maturational] result, like a promissory note that has definitely already been paid out.

> Cessation occurs when one
> Passes beyond the result or dies.
> If classified, it should be understood as
> Uncontaminated or contaminated. (17:19)

The cessation of that unexpired karma definitely occurs in two ways: (1) when one passes beyond the result, or (2) when one dies. Passing beyond the result indicates abandonment by [the path of] meditation. Death indicates that those whose [life] has ceased [experience] individual birth when they link [with other karma].

Also, if classified, karma should be understood as having two types due to the specific subsets of uncontaminated and contaminated [karma]. Therefore though karma is momentary, it connects with its result, since it persists due to not expiring. Also from among those categories of karma that connect to an effect, reincarnating beings of different caste, clan, location, and time experience pleasure and pain regarding various types of object due to having different [types of] body, faculty, color, shape, power, mind, and so on. Thus, [Abhidharmikas conclude]:

Emptiness is not nihilism.
Samsara is not eternal.
The Buddha taught the fact
Of the nonexpiration of karma. (17:20) [249]

Hence because karma and its effect are related, they are discrete states, since they constitute distinct [modes of] existence, and so on. But even though they are discrete states, they are not described as "this state" and "another state." Therefore, since they are not described as definitely enduring due to their own intrinsic reality, emptiness is tenable.

But even though emptiness exists, the error of nihilism does not follow, for samsara also is tenable. Though samsara exists, also the error of being eternal does not follow. The Buddha Bhagavān taught the fact of the nonexpiration of karma in terms of the karma of sentient beings and its perceptible maturation, and that also is tenable.

Therefore this theory [of karma[139]] is tenable here. But understanding the establishment of a karmic result to be like establishing fruit from a sprout that is its cause is not tenable.

Response: Do you construct a courtyard in a Gandharvan city, then ridicule us? Or while [asserting] karma to be untenable, do you argue to establish the effects of karma? Here if you [assert] that karma is established to some extent by its intrinsic reality, then since existent karma would be related to its continuum, or not expire, it would be logical to think it is related to its effect. But if karma that is established by its own intrinsic reality is not tenable, then what is this baseless speculation?

Objection: How is karma not tenable?

Nāgārjuna responds:

Because karma does not arise (17:21a)

Because karma does not arise, therefore it is not tenable. As such, if it has not arisen, how could it be tenable?

139. See verse 17:13.

Objection: Why does karma not arise?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Because it has no intrinsic reality. (17:21b) [250]

Because it has no intrinsic reality, therefore it does not arise. Yet if the intrinsic reality of karma were to exist and it were tenable to say "This is the arising of karma," then what would arise if the intrinsic reality of karma does not exist? But if it does arise, it would not arise by its own intrinsic reality. That which does not arise by its intrinsic reality is [also] not karma because the intrinsic reality of karma does not exist. Thus karma is not tenable.

Objection: The arising of karma exists. Why? Because karma does not expire. Thus since the Bhagavān also stated, "The expiration of karma does not exist," if the arising of karma does not exist, what is it that does not expire? That being so, karma surely exists.

Response: If arising exists, the nonexpiration [of karma] is untenable. Nāgārjuna explains:

> Because it has not arisen
> Therefore, it does not expire. (17:21cd)

The Bhagavān has stated: "Because of that alone, karma has not arisen. Therefore through that alone, it does not expire." If [karma] arises as a separate [entity], how could it expire? But if [karma] expires and the nondemise of that person ends, that person would die. As such, it is not that karma once arisen does not expire.

Objection: When I state, "Though karma ceases because it is momentary, its effect is established due to the fact that [karma] does not expire," then at that time, how can you respond, "If karma has arisen, how could it not come to expire?"

Response: This is the very answer to that [statement]. If you say karma ceases because it is momentary, then what is it that does not expire? If it

has no basis, then not expiring is untenable! In that case, if karma does not expire, and if that karma also ceases, its nonexpiry would not exist, [251] because it does not exist. That being so, it would be contradictory to describe it as "the nonexpiry of that which has ceased."

Objection: Even if karma ceases, there is no error that karmic maturation does not expire.

Response: That also is untenable. Why? Here the desirable or undesirable effects of karma, those that are desired or not desired by the agent who obtains them, are called "[karmic] maturation."

Further, one should understand that if [such effects] are experienced due to specific conditions in this life or in another life, then how could [karma] that has not arisen, that relies on conditions and depends on conditions, be apprehended since it has not expired? If [karma] has arisen, then that [karma] must produce the experience of pleasure and pain in the agent. And if that is so, then since that karma is unexpired, what function does it serve? But if, though arisen, [karma] does not sometimes produce the experience of pleasure and pain in the agent, then what gives rise to it? What then are the characteristics of karma that has arisen?

If, though arisen, [karma] does not produce the experience of pleasure and pain in the agent, then even later it would not produce that [experience] in that [agent,] and who would be that agent in whom the effect later arose?

As such, though you have not understood the meaning of reality, you speak at length, in various ways, and nonsensically, merely about the term "nonexpiration," as if you had already actually resolved everything and attained the meaning. As such, karma surely has no intrinsic reality. Because it has no intrinsic reality, therefore it has not arisen. Because it has not arisen, therefore it does not expire. This [issue] should definitely be viewed in this way. Otherwise, as Nāgārjuna explains:

> If karma had an intrinsic reality
> There is no doubt it would be permanent. (17:22ab) [252]

If karma had an intrinsic reality, there is no doubt it would be permanent. Thus because its essential nature would not change, it is untenable that it would transform. Hence:

> Karma would not be committed
> Because that which is permanent is devoid of activity. (17:22cd)

If karma were permanent, in consequence it could not be committed. Why? Because that which is permanent is devoid of activity. Thus for permanent things that possess the attribute of not changing, activity is untenable. How could karma that is not committed come to mature as the effect of a permanent [karma]? Hence it is untenable that permanent [karma] changes.

But if you think that even if permanent karma does not change, one would reap the result arising from its cause, then also in that case:

> But if karma was not committed,
> One would fear encountering [the result of karma] not committed. (17:23ab)

But if karma was not committed and its result were to arise, one would fear encountering [the result of karma] not committed. In that case, though one has not previously committed a nonvirtuous act, one would have great fear for an undesired result occurring, since just that [result] alone could exist [without a cause]. Further,

> In this regard error would ensue
> For celibacy would not be maintained. (17:23cd)

If karma that was not committed [produced fruit], then in this regard other great errors would ensue because those who do not practice celibacy would reap [the fruit of celibacy] [253] even though they did not practice [celibacy]; it is untenable that some who practice celibacy [always] maintain celibacy; and only those devoid of celibacy, who do not practice it, would possess [the fruit of] celibacy.

Moreover, since it would be pointless to maintain celibacy, it follows therefore one should not maintain celibacy.

This without doubt would
Contradict all mundane activity. (17:24ab)

Thus, if there was no production of karma, this would contradict all mundane activity, by which action is initiated for worldly results, whether by farmers, traders, shepherds, and those who serve the king and so on, in terms of the sciences, manufacture, training in the arts, or giving transmissions, and so forth. Why? Because it follows that [the same] results would arise, whether one does something or not. Further,

Even distinguishing merit
And sin would be untenable. (17:24cd)

If there was no production of karma, then even distinguishing "This is an act of merit!" and "This is an act of sin!" would be untenable. Why? Because in consequence, one would possess all virtuous and nonvirtuous karma one has not committed, and in consequence, one would also obtain their results. Moreover,

Though its maturation has matured
It will mature again and again. [254]
Because if karma endures
Therefore its intrinsic reality exists. (17:25)

If that karma has an intrinsic reality, and also if its effect has arisen, then even though its maturation has already matured, it will mature again and again. Why? Because if karma definitely endures, therefore its intrinsic reality exists. Just as if past [karma] has an intrinsic reality, it will definitely endure and generate an effect. So too since [that karma] definitely endures now, therefore it will necessarily generate an effect in another [life].

Moreover, even though it is as if [karma] definitely endures, you must state the specific proof by which that which generated an effect before now does not generate it again and again.

Objection: You have correctly and exhaustively proclaimed the error of karma possessing an intrinsic reality. But in that case, if you don't teach that karma has no intrinsic reality at all, then due to what [reasoning] would

our conviction change so that [we accept], "Karma has no intrinsic reality?" Therefore set out the various reasons [proving] karma has no intrinsic reality.[140]

Response: Listen well for Nāgārjuna explains:

> Karma is an afflicted state,
> And these afflictions are not real.
> If afflictions are not real,
> What karma would they produce? (17:26)

Anything that is called "karma" arises from affliction that is its cause, for [255] that which is produced by an afflicted body, speech, or mind is called "karma." Hence [karma] does not exist by its own nature, since it is an afflicted state that possesses an afflicted nature, that is derived from affliction, its cause.

It is said, "These afflictions are not real!" (17:26b) [which means] these afflictions that constitute states of karma are not real. Since states of [karma] that are real are not states of affliction, this ultimately means, "They do not exist due to their own intrinsic reality." Also, it is stated below:

> What arises in dependence on
> Attraction, repulsion, and misconception
> Does not intrinsically exist.
> Therefore the afflictions are not real. (23:2)

If any of those afflictions that [produce] states of karma are not real and do not exist by their own intrinsic reality, then what state of karma would they become? Because karma is derived from afflictions that are its cause, and afflictions are derived from misconception that is its cause, therefore they are called "karma" and "affliction."

Objection: Karma and affliction solely exist due to their own intrinsic reality. Why? Because their effects exist due to their own intrinsic reality. In this regard, karma and affliction are said to be conditions [producing] the

140. This passage is indicative of the Svātantrika position.

body. And since the body exists due to its own intrinsic reality, therefore the intrinsic reality of karma and affliction surely exist because the intrinsic reality of their effects exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Karma and affliction
> Are said to be conditions [producing] the body.
> But if karma and affliction are empty [256]
> How can it be said the body exists? (17:27)

In this regard, you said karma and affliction are conditions [producing] the body, but while you assert the cause is established due to the result being established, you do not reveal any other logical reasoning for establishing the cause. But we [assert] that karma and those afflictions that are the cause of the body arise interdependently.

By proclaiming "It is empty of intrinsic reality," we assert that the effect possesses the qualities of the cause. Therefore, because of that if karma and affliction that are the cause of the body are empty, then in being empty how can you say, "The intrinsic reality of the body exists"? The words "The intrinsic reality of the body exists" definitely do not compel [belief].[141]

Objection: But karma surely exists. Why? Because the experiencer who enjoys its results exists. Here the Bhagavān has stated in this regard:[142]

> Sentient beings obscured by ignorance
> Possess the fetter of craving.

Further, he also said that if you commit negative karma, you must experience its maturation. Therefore:

> Any being obscured by ignorance,
> Who possesses craving, is the experiencer. (17:28ab)

141. Literally "bare its fangs" (*gtsigs pa ma yin*).
142. This same verse from an unidentified sūtra was cited by Nāgārjuna in his ABh (*Freedom from All Fear*; D 3829: 68b4).

It is said that sentient beings obscured by ignorance possess the fetter of craving, and you yourself also say they must experience its maturation, and that is the experiencer of the effect of karma. Therefore, first, since the experiencer of the effect of karma is tenable, and a nonexistent effect [257] also does not exist, karma without an agent is also untenable. Thus, because the experiencer exists, the agent and karma also are fully established.

> That [experiencer] is not other than the agent,
> Neither is it that [agent] itself. (17:28cd)

Now, that experiencer of the effect of karma is also not other than the agent of that [karma,] because it is said that [the agent] experiences its maturation. Neither is it not other than that [agent] itself because the appropriated [aggregates] are other. Thus samsara is tenable, and it follows also those faults of eternalism and nihilism also do not arise.

Response: Without constructing the foundation, do you add an upper story? Or do you establish the experiencer of the effect of karma, without establishing the agent, karma, and effect? In that case, if the agent, karma, and effect are untenable, how could the experiencer be tenable? In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> Because karma does not arise
> From conditions, and also
> It does not arise from nonconditions,
> Therefore also the agent does not exist. (17:29)

Because it is not possible for those who advocate dependent origination to say, "That called karma arises from conditions"; therefore it is also not possible for those who advocate causeless arising to say, "That called karma arises without a cause." Karma, first, does not [258] arise from conditions, and also it does not arise from nonconditions. Because karma does not exist, therefore the agent of nonexistent karma also does not exist.

If karma and the agent do not exist,
How could there be an effect arisen from karma?
But if the effect does not exist,
How could the experiencer come to exist? (17:30)

If, on investigation, karma is found not to exist and also the agent does not exist, how could there be an effect arisen from karma? But if it did arise, that would be unacceptable, since it would not be an effect arisen from karma, but an effect arisen without a cause. Therefore many errors would ensue.

But if the effect does not exist, how could the experiencer come to exist? If in that way one were to become the experiencer of the effect, the effect also would be untenable. If [the effect] did not exist, the experiencer would [experience] what? In that case, the statement "The agent, karma, and effect, and experiencer exist!" merely constitute idle words. If the agent, karma, effect, and experiencer are not tenable, how could samsara be tenable?

Objection: Do you fully ascertain the statement: "The agent, karma, effect, experiencer, and afflicted being do not exist"?

Response: How could it be logical to say "That which is a dependent origination either exists or does not exist"?

Objection: Now in that case what thing exists?

Response: How could a thing exist because apprehending a thing that exists has been refuted. Hold this [thought]! Nāgārjuna explains:

Just as he demonstrates emanations, [259]
Through excellent supernatural power,
The emanations also emanate other emanations,
And also those emanations emanate others, (17:31)

So too the agent produces karma,
Like the aspect of an emanation.
For example, like an emanation
Emanating other emanations. (17:32)

Afflicted beings, karma, the body,
The agent, and effect
Are like a city of gandharvas,
Or like a mirage or a dream. (17:33)

Therefore, in that way, how can one who speaks correctly with complete comprehension say whether the emanating agent, the emanations, the city of gandharvas, illusions, mirages, dream-like karma and afflicted beings, or the body, agents, results, and experiencers, exist or not?

Thus, all conceptions of things and nonthings are related to the errors of eternalism and nihilism. Since dependent origination lies beyond the scope of those [who assert] things and nonthings, therefore one should liberate oneself from the erroneous views of eternalism and nihilism. Hence, one becomes convinced and maintains that things are dependent imputations, and thus [260], the presentations of the agent, karma, effect, experiencer, afflicted being, and the body are tenable; yet the errors of eternalism and nihilism do not ensue, and samsara is established.

This is the seventeenth chapter, on the Critique of Karma and Its Effect.

18. Critique of Self and Phenomena

Section Seven

[Abhidharmikas] object: If this is not thatness—since the errors of eternalism and nihilism follow from the view of things and nonthings—then state just what is your thatness and in what way thatness should be comprehended.

Response: First, from the outset thatness has been fully elucidated. In brief, any view of selflessness—that the self does not exist externally or internally—is the purity of thatness. Thatness will be comprehended by cultivating the view of thatness.

Objection: How does the self not existing externally or internally become the view of selflessness?

Response: Those who desire to see thatness should engage in proper and detailed investigation through thorough analysis: That called the "self" is which of the aggregates? Is it not different from the aggregates? Is the self the very aggregates themselves? Or is it something other than the aggregates?

Here, all those who advocate they are different are definitely included among those who advocate they are either different or not different; but being both is untenable. Why? [261] Nāgārjuna explains:

> If the self were the aggregates
> It would possess arising and disintegrating.
> If it were different from the aggregates
> It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates. (18:1)

(1) First, if the self were the aggregates then it would possess the properties

of arising and disintegrating because the aggregates possess the properties of arising and disintegrating. As such, it follows that the self would be multiple [since the aggregates are multiple]; and declaring [the aggregates] to be the self would also be pointless because calling them "the self" would reduce the number of aggregates [to one]. Hence, first it is untenable to state, "The aggregates are the self."

(2) But if [the self] were different from the aggregates, then in that case it would not have the characteristics of the aggregates. Since the aggregates have the characteristics of arising and disintegrating, therefore the self would not have the characteristics of arising and disintegrating because the self would be different from the aggregates. As such, [the self] would be permanent, and if the self were permanent, any endeavor would be pointless. Also, in that case, what use is a permanent unchanging [self]? Thus conceiving the self to exist in that way would be pointless, for [the self] could not engage in nor disengage from [any activity] whatsoever. Hence the self cannot be different from the aggregates.

Thus those with intelligence should ascertain this and engage in proper and detailed investigation. Nāgārjuna explains:

> If the self were not existent,
> How could that which is mine exist? (18:2ab) [262]

If one investigates this, then if the self is not tenable in the least, how could that which is mine exist? Thus if that which belongs to "the self" is called "mine,"[143] then if the self does not exist and that [belonging to it] does not exist, how could it be tenable to state "This belongs to that"? Hence "mine" is also untenable.

Thus to see thatness is to not see internal and external [phenomena] as the self or mine. You should meditate on this and make it stable. Meditating on and stabilizing it will pacify conceiving [internal and external phenomena] as the self or mine.

> Because of pacifying the self and mine,
> Grasping "I" and "mine" will cease. (18:2cd)

143. Here the definite article has not been applied to "mine." Thus "I and mine" (Tib. *nga dang nga'i*) and "the self and mine" (Tib. *bdag dang bdag gi*).

As such, because of fully pacifying the conception of the self and mine, grasping those as "I" and "mine" will cease.

Objection: Thus the one who "stops grasping at 'I' and 'mine' when he sees reality just as it is" is the self, therefore the self and mine surely exist because [the one who stops grasping] exists.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> The one who does not grasp "I"
> Nor "mine" also does not exist.
> Whoever sees grasping "I"
> And "mine" to be nonexistent, does not see. (18:3)

In that case, the one who does not grasp "I" and does not grasp "mine" also does not exist, for that [person] is said to be imputed in dependence on the appropriated [aggregates]. Thus [263] the Bhagavān has stated:[144]

> A venerable with this name or clan
> Does not have the name or clan of a person
> Except through appropriation.

Hence, one is fully designated by the power of appropriation alone, and what is grasped as "I" does not exist, what is grasped as "mine" does not exist, and nothing else exists in the least.

But if they do exist, and if [the self] exists, then how could grasping "I" become nonexistent, and how could grasping "mine" become nonexistent? But if they do exist yet transform, then those with that [idea] would be affected by a wrong view, and they would not see thatness; for Master Āryadeva states:[145]

> If what is called "the self" exists,
> Then what is called "selflessness" would be illogical.

144. Source not found.

145. CŚ, x:19. TCE (p. 263): *gal te bdag ces bya ba yod, bdag med ces bya de mi rigs, yang na de nyid rtogs pa 'am, mya ngan 'da' ba des brdzun 'gyur.* Derge (D 3846: 12.a1): *gal te bdag ces bya yod na, bdag med snyam pa mi rigs shing, de nyid rig pa nges pa las, mya ngan 'das 'gyur zhes bya'ang brdzun.*

Also comprehending [reality]
Or attaining nirvana would be a sham. (x:19)

Hence, whoever sees grasping "I" to be nonexistent and grasping "mine" to be nonexistent does not see reality, since their eye of intelligence has degenerated due to a wrong view.

If the self and mine were to end,
Regarding internal or external states,
Appropriation would come to cease,
And through that ending, birth would end. (18:4)

If wrongly grasping the self and mine were to end regarding internal or external states, then engaging in appropriation would not exist, and that which is appropriated also would not exist. Also, the four types of appropriation would come to cease. Due to appropriation ceasing, then craving would cease, and through it ceasing, then birth would end. This is called "liberation." Thus by seeing reality perfectly as it is, [264] one realizes thatness, and by realizing thatness, one is liberated.

Liberation arises due to karma and affliction ending.
Karma and affliction arise from conceptuality.
These [conceptions] arise from fabrication
And fabrication ceases due to emptiness. (18:5)

In this regard, because karma and affliction are the cause of birth, liberation [arises] due to karma and affliction ending. Also, karma and affliction are not real but arise from conceptuality; they do not exist due to their intrinsic reality.

Affliction arises from inappropriate conceptuality. And just as a single object may give rise to attachment in some or to aversion or confusion in others, therefore the afflictions arise from conceptuality. Formations [that manifest] due to the body, speech, and mind associating with an afflicted mind are karma. Thus the Bhagavān has widely declared:[146]

146. Source not found.

A person who possesses ignorance[147] also creates formations
associated with merit.

Hence, karma and affliction arise from their cause, the conception of what is not real.

These conceptions of what is not real arise from [mental] fabrication, since they arise from the [mental] fabrication of worldly beings.

Those who possess conceptual awareness imagine the phenomena of worldly gain or loss and so on[148] to be true, and since they conceive them as that [i.e. true], such conceptuality therefore is derived from [mental] fabrication. [265]

[Mental] fabrication ceases through emptiness, for the [mental] fabrication of worldly gain and loss, and so forth, ceases due to emptiness. It stops when the intrinsic reality of things is comprehended as emptiness, and through comprehending emptiness it ceases.

Hence, emptiness is thatness, through meditating on emptiness alone you will come to comprehend thatness, and the very comprehension of thatness is called liberation. Master Āryadeva also states:[149]

In brief, Dharma is nonviolence,
And nirvana is emptiness;
Just these two alone
Are declared by the tathāgatas. (xii:23)

Objection: If self and mine do not exist in that way, how could the bhagavāns teach a self regarding such things?

147. TCE (p. 264) states "irrationality" (*mi rigs*). Here I follow the Peking and Narthang versions (TCE p. 264 note 2), "ignorance" (*ma rig*).

148. This refers to the eight worldly states (*'jig rten chos brgyad*): gain or loss (*rnyed dang ma rnyed*), fame or infamy (*snyan dang min snyan*), praise or blame (*bstod dang smad*), being happy or unhappy with such outcomes (*bde dang mi be*).

149. CŚ, xii:23. TCE (p. 265): *mdor na chos ni mi tshe ste, mya ngan 'das pa stong pa nyid, 'di la de gnyis 'ba' zhig ces, de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyis gsungs.* Derge (D 3846: 14a3): *chos ni mdor na mi 'tshe bar, de bzhin gshegs pa rnams kyis gsungs, stong nyid mya ngan 'das pa ste, 'dir ni de gnyis 'ba' zhig go.*

Response: I did not say there is only selflessness. As mentioned below:

> In that case, [the self] is not different from
> That appropriated, nor is it that appropriated.
> The self does not exist without appropriation,
> Neither is it ascertained as nonexistent. (27:8)

However, Lord Buddha comprehends the thoughts and latent tendencies of sentient beings, and those who are learned stop the conceptions of disciples. Nāgārjuna explains:

> "A self" is disclosed,
> And "selflessness" is also revealed.
> Buddhas teach that neither the self
> Nor selflessness exist in the least. (18:6)

In that regard, such views as (1) this world does not exist, (2) the world beyond does not exist, and (3) there are no sentient beings who are born supernaturally, arise in some disciples.

Therefore in order to refute the view that [266] there is no self—for those who have distorted ideation due to mental confusion, who disregard the worlds beyond, who are not concerned with transcending the ways of the world, and who may yet manifest as beings in the great expanse of hell—"a self" is disclosed.

Such views as (1) there is an agent of virtuous and nonvirtuous karma who tastes their desired and undesired results, (2) there is a self that demonstrates that which binds and that which liberates, and (3) if there were no self everything would be pointless, arise in some disciples.

Therefore in order to refute the view that there is a self—for those who have fallen into the great ocean of samsara, who are installed on the crocodile throne of grasping "I" and grasping "mine," whose minds are moved by the flood of views, and who are attached to the joys of existence—"selflessness" is revealed.

To those pure disciples who fully mature their collection of virtue, who are capable of crossing the flood of existence, and who become vessels for the instruction of ultimate [truth]—the victorious buddhas, the great guides who teach ultimate reality, reveal to children who are deceived by

this illusion that neither the self nor selflessness exist in the least. Master Āryadeva also writes:[150]

> Nonexistence, existence, both, and
> Also neither are taught,
> Just as the medicine is dispensed
> When the illness is ascertained. (viii:20)

Further, there are others who turn their backs on seeing thatness, who possess the pride of understanding everything yet do not know everything, who follow their own false reasoning, and who fear nothing would be tenable if the self did not exist; for them "the self" is disclosed.

So too [267] for those whose intellect is not confused, who take the self[151] to be the aggregates in the world, they however are taught "selflessness" by different hidden actions and techniques.

Victorious buddhas who have attained unobscured knowledge of liberation, who are all-knowing, all-seeing, and wish to benefit reincarnating beings, clearly certify, "These two do not exist." They teach the middle way path where neither the self nor selflessness exist, by stating simply: "Since this exists that arises, if this does not exist that does not arise."

Objection: How can it be logical to state, "[Mental] fabrication ceases due to emptiness"?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> That expressed in words is stopped (18:7a)

Because if things are seen to be empty, then that expressed in words is stopped; therefore, due to emptiness, [mental] fabrication ceases. As such, if that expressed in words exists, then in dependence on that, [mental] fab-

150. CŚ, viii:20. TCE (p. 266): *med dang yod dang gnyi ga dang, gnyi ga min pa'ang ston mdzad de, nad kyi dbang gis nges par ni, sman mi 'phrod par 'gyur ba bzhin.* Derge (D 3846: 10a1): *yod dang med dang yod med dang, gnyi ga min zhes kyang bstan te, nad kyi dbang gis thams cad kyang, sman zhes bya bar 'gyur min nam.*

151. TCE (p. 267) states the plural instrumental "by them" (*dag gis*), but here I follow the Peking and Narthang versions (TCE p. 267 note 1) which have "by the self" (*bdag gis*)

rication would exist. If that expressed in words does not exist, how could mental fabrication exist without a basis?

Objection: How could that expressed in words be stopped?

Nāgārjuna explains:

> By stopping the object-field of mind. (18:7b)

The object-field of mind is objects such as form and so on. Because the object-field of that mind, such as form and so on is stopped, therefore that expressed in words is stopped. In that case, if that expressed in words is form and so on, then what is expressed in words?

Objection: How could the object-field of that mind be stopped?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Unarisen and unceasing [268]
> Reality is the same as nirvana. (18:7cd)

Because what is real is seen just as it is, unarisen and unceasing reality is understood to be the same as nirvana, therefore the object-field of mind is stopped. Hence, [mental] fabrication ceases due to emptiness, for Master Āryadeva also said:[152]

> Consciousness is the seed of existence,
> Objects are its object-field.
> When objects are seen to be selfless,
> The seed of existence ceases. (xiv:25)

Objection: What then is the difference between the statement "This world does not exist, the world beyond does not exist, and there are no sentient beings who are born supernaturally" and the statement "All things are unarisen and unceasing"?

152. See above, p. 238, note 34.

Response: These two are very different, but since you do not know the meaning of emptiness you think those two are the same. Indeed taking them to be equivalent without analyzing each and taking them to be equivalent through analyzing each [seem] similar. Yet taking [two things] to be equivalent without analyzing each indicates one possesses the fetter of ignorance, while the other mode of [assessing] equivalence is widely relied on by the victorious buddhas. Therefore the difference between these two is extremely great.

So too, to see "This world does not exist," and so on, is to possess a mind fully confused by ignorance. Alternately, to see "All things are unarisen and unceasing," because they are empty of their own intrinsic reality, is due to previously cultivating the understanding [of reality]. Therefore the difference between these two is extremely great.

Furthermore, like [the statement] "Nonexistence is not observed," the statement "This world does not exist" is empty [269] words [or mere rhetoric]. For example, though you say to a blind person, "Go this way," he may mistake [the path] and fall, since he cannot see [the path] because he lacks eyesight. So too, though you state, "This world does not exist," since you don't actually see this because you lack the eye of understanding, you will be affected by these errors.

Moreover, for example, consider a dispute where two witnesses present accounts of an event, one who has direct perception of it and a second who lacks direct perception [of the event] but longs for wealth or friends. When both are made to relate the event, [the second] speaks of what he thinks happened, but because he did not directly perceive it, [his version] remains a fabrication, and he [is regarded as] lacking integrity and credibility. When the other relates the event because he directly perceived it, he speaks the truth, and he [is regarded as] possessing integrity and credibility.

So too all things are empty, and because they are empty, they are unarisen and unceasing. Those who have direct perception [of emptiness] achieve excellence and are praised. Others who are affected by erroneous views are derided by scholars because they do not directly perceive emptiness. Therefore these two are very different. Master Rāhulabhadra states in his *Praise of Perfect Wisdom*:[153]

153. Rāhulabhadra, *Praise of Perfect Wisdom* (D 1127: 76b2–3).

If you see, it binds;
Also, if you don't see, it binds.
If you see, it liberates;
Also, if you don't see, it liberates.

In that case, it is the object of the stainless eye of intelligence that knows thatness, it is not the object of the eye of intelligence [270] obscured by the great darkness of ignorance.

Moreover, first you established the conceit of being a scholar, so too you contemplated [philosophical] view and became my opponent. But you did not engage those who advocate existence and nonexistence. Let me explain the difference. How [are they different]? Existence and nonexistence are expressed due to the power of a [philosophical] view. But I see things to be nonexistent, like the horns of a rabbit.

I do not say they are nonexistent nor not nonexistent because I abandon [such] linguistic errors. Thus because they are interdependent, I see the way they exist or do not exist to be like a reflection, and I speak of them in this way. It is as if you sell [an ordinary] jewel for the cost of an indranīla [sapphire,] and though you did not obtain a result in line with your expectations, you are mentally elated.

Objection: If all things were the same as nirvana, then all endeavor would be pointless because Dharma and non-Dharma would not be differentiated!

Response: Do you view [mundane] endeavor as existent when you see what is real just as it is? Previously Nāgārjuna stated:

That expressed in words is stopped
By stopping the object-field of mind. (18:7ab)

Therefore, [mundane] endeavor exists for those who possess confused minds, but for those who see thatness, it is said:

There is no activity.
There is nothing other than that.

So too, it is like stating:

A person with ignorance creates formations that arise from merit.

Master Āryadeva also states:[154]

What to do, if all does not exist?
Fear may arise in you,
But if activity exists
This teaching [271] will not stop it. (viii:9)

That being so,

Reality is the same as nirvana. (18:7d)

This is stated for the sake of ultimate [truth]. For the sake of the world, Nāgārjuna says:

All that is real and not real,
That is real and not real. (18:8ab)

Thus the Bhagavān has also stated:[155]

What is well known to exist in the world I also say exists.
What is not well known to exist in the world I also say does not exist.

Therefore, when something is taken as conventionally existent in the world and well known as real in the world, then this the Bhagavān declares to be real. That which is not well known as real in the world, then this the Bhagavān declares to be not real. That which is well known in the world as real and not real, that the Bhagavān has declared to be real and not real.

154. CŚ, viii:9. TCE (p. 270): *kun med ci zhig byar yod ces, khyod ni 'jigs pa skye bar 'gyur, gal te bya ba yod na ni, chos 'di ldog pa ma yin no.* Derge (D 3846: 9b2): *kun yod ma yin ci bya zhes, khyod la 'jigs pa skye 'gyur grang, gal te bya ba yod na ni, chos 'di zlog byed mi 'gyur ro.*
155. This same passage from an unidentified sūtra was cited by Bhāvaviveka in his *Lamp of Wisdom* (D 3853: 189a.6).

For example, two villagers went to a village to accomplish various tasks and entered a temple to see the images. When they looked at the paintings one said, "The one with the wheel in his hand is Īshvara," but the other said, "You are wrong, the one with the trident in his hand is Īshvara, the one with a wheel in his hand is Viṣhṇu." As they argued, others came closer, forming a circle, and each respectfully offered his opinion, stating, "Your statement is true," and to the other [272] "Your statement is false." Then a wandering ascetic declared: "This is not Great Īshvara in the least, nor is it Viṣhṇu, it is just a painting on the wall."

Indeed, there are many erroneous and false statements made by the power of worldly convention, such as "This is true" or "This is not true." Thus the Bhagavān has observed that things are empty of intrinsic reality, but by the power of worldly convention it is said: "This is real. This is also not real. This is real and not real." Ultimately,

> Neither unreal nor real
> Is the teaching of the Buddha (18:8cd)

For things that are empty of an intrinsic reality, that are like an illusion, a dream, a mirage, a reflection, and an echo, how could they be described as real or unreal? Therefore the teachings of the bhagavān buddhas are free from the error of existence and nonexistence, and they clarify all [the views] presented by non-Buddhists and the unique [nature of] ultimate [truth].

Further, there are alternate interpretations:

> One says: [Things] arise from everything that exists.
>
> Another says: They arise from causes whose effects did not exist previously.
>
> One says: They arise from that which exists and does not exist.

The teaching of the Buddha is that things are imputed from causes and conditions, and they are neither existent nor nonexistent. [273] Even so, he said:[156]

156. See p. 242, note 79 above.

> Kātyāyana, this world holds to two states, for in general it holds to existence or nonexistence.

Hence the bhagavān buddhas make various statements due to the influence of worldly conventions. Therefore those who desire to see thatness should not cling to such statements made due to the influence of worldly conventions but apprehend what is thatness itself.

Objection: What are the characteristics of thatness?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Not knowledge from another, pacified,
> Not fabricated by mental fabrication,
> Nonconceptual, and not a distinct object.
> These are the characteristics of thatness. (18:9)

"Not knowledge from another" means it is not understanding [acquired] from another, for it arises as one's own experience without [reliance on] scripture, and this ultimately means "one's own perception." It is "pacified," for this ultimately means "empty of intrinsic reality." It is "not fabricated by [mental] fabrication," for this ultimately means "free from worldly phenomena." It is "nonconceptual," for it does not impute "this" and "that." It is "not a distinct object," for it is not distinguished as "It is this" or "It is that."

In that regard, because conceptuality does not exist, therefore it is not fabricated by mental fabrication. Because it is not fabricated by worldly phenomena, therefore it is pacified. Because it is pacified, therefore it is not a distinct object. Therefore, the knowledge of such essential nature [274] is self-cognition and not knowledge [acquired] from another, and these should be understood as characteristics of thatness. There are also other characteristics of thatness.

> Whatever arises in dependence on something
> First it is not that,
> But neither is it distinct from that.
> Therefore it is neither annihilated nor eternal. (18:10)

In that case, whatever arises in dependence on something, first it is not that, but neither is it different from that. If it were different from its [cause], and if it were logical that it arose even when its [cause] does not exist, then it would not be different from its [cause] since it would not arise. For example, when a sprout arises in dependence on its seed, the seed itself is not the sprout. But the sprout is not different from the seed because there is no intrinsic reality of the sprout that is separate from the seed.

Thus, because whatever arises in dependence on something is not that [thing] and neither is it different from that [thing], therefore it is neither annihilated nor eternal.

Hence if a seed were to become a sprout, the seed would be eternal. But because a seed is not the sprout, therefore the seed is not eternal. If the seed is different [from the sprout] and the sprout is also different [from the seed,] then this would constitute annihilation, since the continuum of the sprout would be severed completely. But because the seed is not different from the sprout, therefore the seed is not annihilated. Master Āryadeva also stated:[157]

> Because things interact,
> Therefore they are not annihilated.
> Because things stop,
> Therefore they are not eternal. (x:25) [275]

Hence because it is not described as this nor as something else, it is neither eternal nor annihilated, therefore this is a defining characteristic of thatness. Nāgārjuna explains:

> They do not have the same purpose, nor different purpose,
> Nor are they annihilated, nor eternal.
> This is the nectar revealed by the Buddha
> Who is the protector of the world. (18:11)

157. CŚ, x:25. TCE (p. 274): *gang phyir dngos po 'jug 'gyur ba, des na chad par mi 'gyur ro, gang phyir dngos po ldog 'gyur ba, des na rtag par mi 'gyur ro.* Derge (D 3846: 124): *gang phyir dngos po 'jug 'gyur ba, des na chad par mi 'gyur zhing, gang phyir dngos po ldog 'gyur ba, des na rtag par mi 'gyur ro.*

Thus, the paths of higher rebirth and liberation that are differentiated do not have the same purpose, nor different purpose, nor are they annihilated nor eternal.

This is beyond the errors of being identical, distinct, annihilated, or eternal; it is supremely profound; and it clarifies ultimate thatness because [through it] one obtains mundane and transcendent joy. It is the nectar revealed by the Bhagavān Buddha, who is omniscient, all-seeing, and possesses the ten powers, due to his unconditional love. Thus we should accomplish it.

In this way those who have manifested the state of those who enter this [suchness] instantly establish it. Those who do not complete the accumulation [of merit] do not establish it instantly, but definitely establish it in other lives. Master Āryadeva also states:[158]

> Though in this life one may not obtain
> Freedom from attachment due to understanding this,
> It will definitely be obtained
> Without exertion in another life. (viii:22)

[And Nāgārjuna says:]

> When perfect buddhas do not arise
> And shrāvakas disappear [276]
> The pristine wisdom of pratyekabuddhas
> Will fully arise independently. (18:12)

But for those with just a little familiarity [with this state,] after a long period when perfect buddhas do not arise and shrāvakas disappear and the conditions [for them] are no longer extant, even then the pristine wisdom of pratyekabuddhas will fully arise from conditions independent of the knowledge of others.

Those who establish this nectar as revealed [by the Buddha] will come to possess this result. Hence, they desire to abandon this samsaric jungle that

158. CŚ, viii:22. TCE (p. 275): *de nyid shes pas 'di la ni, 'dod chags bral ba ma thob kyang, tshe rabs gzhan la 'bad med par, nges par thob de las bzhin no*. Derge (D 3846: 10a2): *de nyid shes pas gal te 'dir, mya ngan 'das pa ma thob kyang, skye ba phyi mar 'bad med par, nges par thob 'gyur las bzhin no*.

is pervaded by conceptuality. Those who desire to obtain the state of nectar accomplish it through exertion and definitely come to achieve ultimate thatness.

This is the eighteenth chapter, on the Critique of Self and Phenomena.

19. Critique of Time

[Abhidharmikas] observe: In this regard, due to your critique of the agent and activity, and in addition through your teaching of the logic [proving] that, you have shaken to its very foundations this great and rigid field of views on existence and nonexistence that has long endured. Therefore through your desire to benefit me, it is now appropriate to investigate time.

Response: Good.

Objection: In this regard, the Bhagavān taught the three times in various contexts. [277] If [time] were nonexistent, it would be illogical to teach it; therefore the three times surely exist.

Response: The Bhagavān taught the three times due to the power of worldly convention, but in reality, the three times are untenable. In what way? In this regard, first future time having transformed (*gyur*), in stages it became the present, and having become the present in stages, it became the past. Thus time should be taken as a single [entity]. For example, the Caitra who had gone to the village is Caitra himself, and the one who returns from the village is Caitra himself. As such, he is not differentiated in three: the one who has not gone, the one who has gone, and the one who returns.

But if the future, that is a distinct state, is different from the present and different from the past, then even in that case the three components [of time] would be permanent. If they are permanent, then investigating the three times would be pointless because there would be no need.

Furthermore, if there are many things called "time" and they are established from themselves or dependently, then you may think they are established in reliance on the three times. Nāgārjuna explains:

If the present and future
Exist in reliance on the past
The present and future
Would exist in the past. (19:1)

If the present and future were to exist in reliance on the past, in that case the present and future would exist in the past. If they existed in the past, then also those two would be past [i.e., ceased]. In that case [278] there would surely be just one single time. If there were just one single time, then reliance would be untenable, for how could [one single time] rely on itself? Also time would surely be untenable because reliance would be untenable.

If the past does not exist since it has disintegrated and ceased, how then could both [the present and future] exist?

But if you think that the past alone exists then that is unacceptable since the present is real because it exists, and it does not [exist in] the past.

Objection: When you say, "The present and future are established in reliance on the past," at that time how could those two exist in the past?

Response: Because we say, "They are established in reliance on that," it follows both [the present and future] would exist in [the past], because that is [the nature of] reality. Furthermore, Nāgārjuna explains:

If the present and
Future do not exist, then
How could the present
And future rely on [the past]? (19:2)

If the present and future do not exist in the past, how could the present and future that do not exist then, come to rely on the past? In that case, if the three components [of time] were to collect together, reliance would be tenable. But if they were to exist in [the past,] then since [the past] would also rely on the existence of [the other] two, what use would that be? Hence, first it is untenable that present and future time are established in reliance on the past.

But if, after considering this, you think that the present and future are

definitely established without relying on the past, then Nāgārjuna explains: [279]

> Without relying on the past
> Neither could be established. (19:3ab)

Without relying on past time, neither the present nor future could be established from themselves.

> Therefore neither present
> Nor future time exist. (19:3cd)

In that case, therefore, since neither present nor future time exist in the past, reliance [on the past] is untenable. Since those two are not established without relying on the past, therefore neither present and future time exist.

> Serially apply this method
> To the remaining two.
> So too understand the superior, inferior,
> And mediocre, as well as identicality and so forth. (19:4)

Serially reapply this method to the remaining two times. So too understand the superior, inferior, and mediocre, as well as identicality and so forth.

If the present and past exist in reliance on the future, in that case both [the present and past] would exist [then]. As such, the present and past would become the future because they would exist in [the future]. Thus, since they would exist at the same time [as the future], it is not tenable that they rely [on the future]. But because [the past and present] do not rely on [the future], they also do not exist.

Also, how could those two [i.e., the past and present] come to exist [in reliance] on the future that [280] has not occurred and does not yet exist? But if the future definitely exists, then because it exists it would become the present. But since then it would not be the future, that is unacceptable. Yet if those two [i.e., the past and present] do not exist in [the future], then how would they rely on it? But if they did rely on that, in that case it would be pointless to investigate reliance because they exist.

But if they don't rely on the future, those two [i.e., the past and present] would not exist.

So too, if the past and the future were to exist in reliance on the present, in that case also those two would come to exist at that [time]. Thus the past and future would become the present because they would exist in [the present]. As such, it is untenable that they rely on [the present], since they would exist at the same time [as the present]. Also, because they [i.e., the past and future] do not rely on [the present,] they would not exist. And because the past has disintegrated and because the future has not yet arisen, how could those which do not exist in the least rely on the present?

But if they are established as existent, what use would it be for them to be reliant? Also, they would not be established if not reliant. That being so, the past does not exist, the future does not exist, and also the present does not exist.

If the superior and inferior were established in reliance on the mediocre, in that case the superior and inferior would exist when the mediocre exists; they would not exist due to themselves. But if the mediocre did not exist, how could the superior and inferior come to exist in reliance on it? Also, they would not be established if not reliant.

But if, in considering this, you think that if the mediocre exists, then the superior and inferior would exist, then this point will be addressed. If the three components existed, then what need for them to rely [on each other]? Even if they don't rely [on each other], still they would not be established from any [combination of] their own states. Hence the superior, [281] inferior, and mediocre do not exist intrinsically.

So too, if the superior and mediocre exist in reliance on the inferior, or if the mediocre and inferior states exist in reliance on the superior, or if the first and last exist in reliance on the intermediate, or if the first and intermediate exist in reliance on the last, or if the last and intermediate exist in reliance on the first, or if the near exists in reliance on the distant, or if the distant exists in reliance on the near, so too if the prior exists in reliance on the later, and if identicality exists in reliance on distinction, if this exists in reliance on the other, if the effect exists in reliance on the cause, if the short exists in reliance on the long, if the small exists in reliance on the big, if the self exists in reliance on the selfless, if the conditioned relies on the unconditioned, and if one and two rely on many, and if one and many rely on two, and if two and many rely on one—then it may be

said that all these are established in reliance on something. All these come to exist [in relation] to those because if they do not exist, reliance on them would not be tenable. That being so, all these are not established from themselves alone. Such statements are made due to the power of worldly convention.

Objection: Why do you say that those which are not reliant are not established? That is illogical. Here time is measured in terms of seconds, minutes, hours, days and nights, fortnights, months, three-month seasons, four-month seasons, years, and so on. Therefore, since they are reliant, what use is it to say [they are not established]?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Time that does not endure is not apprehended.
> Time that is apprehended [282]
> Does not endure. How then
> Can the unapprehended be imputed as time? (19:5)

In this regard, those things that definitely endure may be measured. For example, it is said, "This tree is tall," "This lake is long," "This elephant is big." However, time that is measured does not endure as something absolute in the least. Thus, even if it is a little before or a little after the hour, it is still imputed as "an hour." If [an hour] does not endure as something absolute, what need is there to speak of days and so on?

But if, in considering this, you think that [things] definitely endure for a second, then I will address this point.

Anything that definitely endures for a second is not past and it is also not future. Why? Because it definitely endures. Yet solely because it is something that definitely does not endure, it does not exist in that way [i.e., enduring for a second]. But if, because it interacts, you say it does not exist in that way, then if it definitely endures, it would be established. Yet since it does not interact, how could that which does not interact be present?

Hence, time that definitely endures does not exist. How can that which does not exist be apprehended? How can those not apprehended be imputed as "seconds," "minutes," "hours," and so on? Hence a thing called "time" is completely untenable.

Objection: Time surely exists. Why? Because it is an imputed existent. Those called "prior and later," "simultaneous and nonsimultaneous," and "long duration and short duration" are the marks of time. In that case [time] exists because it is an imputed existent.

Nāgārjuna responds: [283]

If time depends on things, (19:6a)

If those such as prior and later were the marks of time, then time would be imputed in dependence on things alone and not established from itself.

Objection: That is not so, for time is fully established from itself alone. That called "time" is the cause of what is prior and later and so on. That which becomes [prior and later] through such states, is time.

Nāgārjuna responds:

How could time exist apart from things? (19:6b)

How could it be tenable that your time is established from itself, and definitely exists apart from things? If the cause definitely exists in time that is unchanging and permanent,[159] how could a distinct effect arise? If Caitra existed earlier and Gupta existed later, and their essential nature was not different, then how could these two be taken [to exist earlier and later] due to being distinct? Both Caitra and Gupta—who are not distinguished as existing earlier and later—would become earlier and later, through their time being [distinguished as] earlier and later. But if their time was not different, how could those two be taken [as distinct] due to their time being distinct? Master Āryadeva states:[160]

159. TCE (p. 283) states *dus mi 'gyur brtag pa nges par*. But here I follow the Peking version (p. 283 note 2): *dus mi 'gyur ba rtag pa nges pa*.

160. CŚ, ix:18. TCE (p. 283): *'bras bu rgyu ni tha dad pas, des na brtag pa yod ma yin, yang na gang na rgyu yod pa, de na 'bras bu yod ma yin*. Here I follow the spelling *rtag* as found in the Peking version *des na rtag pa yod ma yin* (p. 283 note 6). This agrees with the Derge version of the CŚ (D 3846: 10b7): *'bras bu yis ni rgyu bshig pa, des na rgyu ni rtag ma yin, yang na gang na rgyu yod pa, de na 'bras bu yod ma yin*.

Since the effect and the cause are distinct
[A cause] that is permanent does not exist.
Again, when the cause exists
Its effect does not exist. (ix:18)

But if those two are not distinct and their time is not distinct, then because a term expressing distinction does not apply to them, either all are distinct or none are distinct. That being so, time is solely designated in dependence on things. It is not tenable that time definitely exists apart from things as something other.

Objection: Time is surely designated in dependence on things because it is said that it exists for an hour, it exists for a day, [284] it exists for a month. Thus time surely exists.

Response: If things exist, time would exist in dependence on things. Nāgārjuna explains:

If things are entirely nonexistent,
How then could time exist? (19:6cd)

Since the statement "Things are entirely untenable" has already been established, therefore if you think that time is fully established in dependence on things, how then could your time come to exist, since things are entirely nonexistent?

Objection: If time does not exist, then such statements as "It was done," "It is done," "It will be done," and so on would surely be untenable because in that case [time] would lack distinction. But because they are tenable, time surely exists.

Response: Nāgārjuna previously stated:

That expressed in words is stopped (18:7a)

Then you should desist from uttering the words "Statements such as ['it was done' . . .] are untenable." But not only regarding words such as those,

all your statements are untenable. But they are tenable due to the power of worldly convention. Also Nāgārjuna taught:

> All that is real or not real (18:8a)

Hence, you should understand that a thing called "time" does not exist in the least, yet dependent imputation is established.

This is the nineteenth chapter, on the Critique of Time. [285]

20. *Critique of Cause and Effect*

[Abhidharmikas] object: Time surely exists. Why? [Because] the effect is established from the assembly [of causes and conditions] and time. A sprout will not arise even though earth, seeds, and water already exist, but when those [causes and conditions] assemble with time, and they arise as an assemblage, then a sprout will occur. Thus because a sprout will not occur when not assembled with time, but will occur when [that assembly] exists, therefore time surely exists.

Response: If it is tenable that effects arise, then time would also exist since effects arise. But how could the time of an effect that possesses a cause exist, since the arising of effects is untenable? Thus it may be asked, "If an effect were to arise from that assembly, would the effect arise through existing or not existing in that assembly? It is untenable that it arises from both. In what way? [Nāgārjuna explains]:

> If an effect arises from the assembly
> Of causes and conditions,
> And if the effect were to exist in that assembly
> How could it arise from that assembly? (20:1)

Things that assemble form an assembly. If an effect arises from the assembly of causes and conditions and if the effect were to exist in that assembly, how could an existent effect arise from that assembly?

But if though it exists it were to arise, then in that case investigating its arising would be pointless. Thus if it exists [286] what use would there be in it arising again? Also an infinite regress would ensue because it would never not arise.

But in reflecting on this if you think that no effect exists in the assembly

of causes and conditions, for a nonexistent effect arises through the assembly of causes and conditions, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

> If the effect were to arise from the assembly
> Of causes and conditions and
> If that effect did not exist in that assembly,
> How could it arise from that assembly? (20:2)

If the effect were to arise from the assembly of causes and conditions, and if that effect did not exist in that assembly, how could a nonexistent effect arise from that assembly?

But if, though nonexistent, it did arise, then, having arisen, it would still be nonexistent. In arising, if a nonexistent state arose, how could it come to exist? Such a state is not like the arising of an ox. Furthermore,

> If the effect were to exist in the
> Assembly of causes and conditions,
> It should be apprehended in that assembly;
> But it is not apprehended in that assembly. (20:3)

If the effect were to exist in the assembly of causes and conditions, then it is appropriate that it is apprehended as definitely enduring in that assembly like a bird in a tree, but [287] it is not apprehended in that [assembly]. How could that which is not apprehended [there] exist [there]? Hence it is not tenable that the effect exists in that assembly.

> If the effect does not exist in the
> Assembly of causes and conditions,
> Then causes and conditions would be the same
> As those which are not causes and conditions. (20:4)

If the effect does not exist in the assembly of causes and conditions, then causes and conditions would be the same as those which are not causes and conditions. In that case, everything would arise from everything, but that also is unacceptable. Hence the arising of a nonexistent effect in the assembly [of causes and conditions] is untenable.

Objection: That is not so because of the certainty of causes and conditions. If everything was the cause or condition of everything, it would be logical to say everything arises from everything. But everything is not the cause or condition of everything, thus the certainty of causes and conditions is observed, for a barley sprout and not a rice sprout arises from a barley seed, and cloth and not a vase arises from thread that is its cause. Therefore because of the certainty of causes and effects, everything does not arise from everything.

Response: That is incorrect because you do not teach a definitive proof; [that is,] you do not teach a definitive proof for the [thesis] "causes and conditions are certain." But if that does not exist, how could a definitive proof be correct? Hence, since a definitive proof does not exist, [288] it follows that causes and effects would be similar to noncauses and noneffects.

Thus if everything were to arise from everything, then a barley seed would not [give rise to] a barley sprout, a rice seed would not [give rise to] a rice sprout. If neither exist, from where does the certainty arise for you to state the barley seed is solely the cause of the barley sprout and it is not the cause of a rice sprout? If causes and conditions [produce] effects, it is tenable that there is certainty since an effect exists. But that [certainty] does not exist, and if it does not exist the definitive proof would not exist, so how could that be plausible? That being so, since the definitive proof does not exist, then it follows that causes and effects are similar to noncauses and noneffects.

Objection: The words of a definitive proof are pointless for direct perception, for when a barley sprout is perceived to arise from a barley seed, why then seek a separate definitive proof?

Response: Such apparent certainty is tenable if the effect exists in its causes and conditions, but untenable if it does not; therefore I say "That which is nonexistent does not arise." Hence, you must demonstrate some alternate proofs for the arising of what is nonexistent. If those alternate proofs establish the arising of the nonexistent, and that is clearly seen, then everything would not arise from everything. But since the proof of the arising of the nonexistent does not exist, and since alternate [proofs] cannot be

demonstrated; therefore, so that it is clearly seen, demonstrate what effect exists in the assembly.

Objection: Here the cause ceases after the cause produces an effect; therefore the cause establishes the effect and conditions assist [the effect]. Thus, what use is it to speculate whether the effect exists or does not exist in the assembly [of causes and conditions]?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the cause ceases when [289]
> The cause has produced an effect,
> The cause itself would be twofold:
> That which produces and that which ceases. (20:5)

If the cause ceases when the cause has produced an effect, then the cause itself would be twofold: that which produces and that which ceases. But it is untenable that the cause itself is twofold because that which has ceased does not generate [an effect]. It is also untenable that the cause produces [an effect] because it is untenable that a cause produces an existent or nonexistent effect. Thus, what use is it for a cause to produce an existent effect? And for whom is a nonexistent [effect] produced?

Objection: The cause does not cease when the cause has produced an effect; in fact the effect arises just as the cause ceases.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the cause ceases
> Without the cause producing an effect,
> Then through the cause ceasing
> The effect would arise without a cause. (20:6)

If the cause ceases without the cause producing an effect, then through the cause ceasing and disintegrating, the effect would arise without a cause, but that does not occur. In other words, [an effect] arising without a cause is unacceptable because many errors would ensue.

Objection: The effect arises together with the cause and the assembly, like a lamp and its flame. Therefore, since the assembly [of causes and conditions] and the effect arise at the same time, like a lamp and its flame, it is not tenable [290] to think that the effect exists or does not exist in any assembly [of causes and conditions].

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the effect arises together
> With the assembly,
> It follows that the generator
> And that generated exist at the same time. (20:7)

If the effect only arises together with the assembly [of causes and conditions], in that case it follows that the causal generator and the object generated would occur at the same time, but that is untenable. As such, how could the father and son arise at the same time? But if they were to arise [at the same time], how could the principle "This is the cause of that" and "That is the effect of this" exist? Hence, it is not tenable that the effect emerges together with the assembly [of causes and conditions].

Objection: If the effect arises before the assembly [of causes and conditions] and in that case the assembly arises later, then this would be clear, like a vase [illuminated] by a lamp.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the effect were to arise
> Before the assembly,
> An effect free from causes and conditions
> Would occur without a cause. (20:8)

If the effect were to exist before [the assembly] and the assembly were to occur later, in that case an effect free from causes and conditions would occur without a cause.

What use is it to investigate [291] whether an effect that has already arisen, arises again in the assembly of causes and conditions? As such, if

you accept that causes and conditions [must] assemble for the purpose [of generating] an effect, then also the effect [must] already have arisen. Hence this [assertion] is absurd.

Objection: The effect is established through complete transformation of the cause. Therefore, if a cause ceases through an earlier state having ceased, it would become an effect. As such, a cause that also has not ceased would not become an effect, and an effect would also not arise from a nonexistent cause.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the cause ceased but it
> Transitioned to the effect,
> It follows that the cause
> That arose earlier would arise again. (20:9)

If a thing that is a cause ceased earlier, and that obtained subsequently is called the effect, the cause would transition [to the effect] but not become [the effect]. For example, just as a dancer who discards one costume and puts on another does not become [another]. But if transitioning to another state is to become that state, then it follows that the cause that arose earlier would arise again. However, because things that completely transform do not endure, they never arise [again].

Objection: When I say, "The cause that has ceased will become the effect," then why do you say, "It follows that which transitions [to another state] arises again"?

Response: Why do you question the path as you are entering the path? Otherwise, since you call things that continuously change "effects," you have not understood my words. Therefore, since you have this difficulty, you are now ready, [292] so listen with a focused mind, for I teach this view to those who conceive that the cause is related to the effect!

Here you may ask whether if the cause were to generate an effect, would it be generated by that which has ceased or by that which endures? Or you may ask, would the effect be generated again, or that which has not arisen be

generated? But [such alternatives] are completely untenable. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> How could that which has ceased and subsided
> Generate an effect that has [already] arisen?
> How could a cause be related to its effect,
> [If it] generates it by enduring? (20:10)

First, if you conceive that a cause that has ceased and completely subsided generates an effect that has arisen, then that is illogical; for how could a cause that has ceased and subsided generate a result that has [already] arisen and exists? What would you conceive to be generated by that which is not a cause? What need is there to generate that which has arisen?

But if you think that a cause related to its effect generates an effect by enduring while possessing its effect, then that is also untenable. As such, how could a cause generate an existent effect by [the cause] enduring? Therefore when the effect has arisen and it is related to the cause, it is not that it has not arisen. What use is a cause that again generates that which has [already] arisen? Hence, that is also untenable.

> But if it is not related to its effect,
> How could it generate its effect? (20:11ab) [293]

But if you think a cause not related to its effect generates an effect without possessing an effect, then can you state how the cause could generate its effect? When the term "effect" does not exist, since the effect does not exist because it has not arisen, at that time how could the statement "A cause generates its effect" be tenable? But if, though it does not exist, it were to exist by the might of stating "generates," there is no doubt that even the horns of a rabbit would be generated. Moreover,

> A cause does not generate an effect
> That is seen or not seen. (20:11cd)

In this regard, if you ask whether, [when] a cause generates an effect, it generates that which is seen or not seen? Then, neither is tenable. Why? First if something were generated that is seen, then it would generate something

that has [already] arisen. As such, that which has not arisen is not seen, and that which has arisen would not need to be generated. But if you think that a cause generates an effect that is not seen, then if a cause were to generate something that is unseen, it would not generate it. Hence, a cause does not generate an effect that is unseen.

Moreover, here you may ask whether an effect generated by a cause is generated through contact. But contact between the cause and effect is completely untenable. Why?

> A past effect never makes mutual contact
> With a cause that is past, [294]
> That is unarisen,
> Or that is arisen. (20:12)

A past effect never makes mutual contact with a cause that is past, that is unarisen [or future,] or that is arisen [or present], because past and future effects and causes do not exist. A past effect and an arisen cause also never make contact because the effect does not exist.

> An unarisen effect never makes contact
> With a cause that is unarisen,
> That is past,
> Or that is arisen. (20:13)

An unarisen effect never makes contact with a cause that is unarisen, that is past, or that is arisen because past and future effects and causes do not exist. An unarisen effect and an arisen cause also never make contact because the effect does not exist.

> An arisen effect never makes contact
> With a cause that is arisen,
> That is unarisen,
> Or that is past. (20:14)

An arisen effect never makes contact with a cause that is arisen because it is untenable that [295] the words "This is the cause of that," "This is the effect of that" apply in that way to a cause and effect. And it is also untenable that

those transformed in that way make contact. An effect that is arisen never makes contact with a cause that is unarisen, or that is past, because past and future causes do not exist.

> If they do not make contact,
> How could a cause generate an effect? (20:15ab)

Therefore if it is untenable in any respect that a past, future, or present effect and a past, future, or present cause make mutual contact, how could it be tenable to state, "A cause generates an effect"?

> Even though they do make contact,
> How could a cause generate an effect? (20:15cd)

But just as that is untenable, also, if you think that the cause and effect make contact, even then, how could an existent cause generate an effect? As such, that which exists also cannot be generated, and causal activity also does not exist. Moreover,

> If a cause is empty of the effect,
> How could it generate an effect? (20:16ab)

Here you may ask, if a cause generates an effect, does it generate that effect due to [that cause] being empty or not empty of the effect's intrinsic state? Then, first, if you think a cause that is empty of the effect itself generates an effect, that is not tenable in the least. [296] But if that were tenable, then sand would generate tahini, and water would generate butter. Moreover, if sand and sesame were similar in being unrelated to tahini, and water and curd were similar in being unrelated to butter, then how could there be a difference in tahini being derived from sesame and not from sand, or butter being derived from curd and not from water? Hence it is untenable to state, "A cause that is empty of the effect's intrinsic state generates the effect."

But if, on reflecting on this, you think [a cause] generates an effect that is not empty of the effect's intrinsic state, then I will address this point:

> If the cause is not empty of the effect,
> How could it generate the effect? (20:16cd)

If the cause is not empty of the effect's intrinsic state, then how could it be tenable that it generates an effect? When the effect exists, it is not empty of its own intrinsic reality, and that which has already arisen does not [need to be] generated again. Hence, one who states "The cause that is not empty of the effect's intrinsic state, generates the effect" indicates a person who is incapable of recognizing [error].

Section Eight

Moreover, if you ask whether that which is "the cause that generates the effect" is also [a cause] that arises and ceases by being empty or not empty of an intrinsic reality, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

> An effect that is not empty would not arise,
> That which is not empty would not cease. [297]
> That which is not empty would also
> Be unceased and unarisen. (20:17)

An effect that is not empty of an intrinsic reality and definitely endures due to its own intrinsic state would not arise and also would not cease. Why? Because it definitely endures due to its own intrinsic state. Thus, since it is untenable its own essence transforms, therefore if you think that an effect is not empty, then it would also be unceased and unarisen because it would be permanent. Hence, an effect that is not empty would not arise and would not cease.

But if, on reflecting on this, you think an effect that is empty arises and ceases, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

> How could that which is empty arise?
> How could that which is empty cease?
> It follows that which is empty
> Has not ceased and has not arisen (20:18)

How could an effect that is empty of an intrinsic reality and not established by itself arise and how could it cease?

But if you think that though that effect does not exist due to its own intrinsic reality, it does arise and cease, then this must be addressed.

If something apart from the nature of the effect arises and ceases; or if something apart from the thing that is the effect arises; what arises as the effect due to that? As such, that which arises as the effect does not become the effect.

Hence, even if one fully comprehends that effect to be empty, [298] it follows that it has not ceased and not arisen because [the effect] does not exist. Therefore, this also is unacceptable. Hence an effect that is empty does not arise and does not cease.

Moreover, if you ask whether those that become the cause and effect are identical or distinct, then Nāgārjuna observes:

> It could never be tenable that
> Cause and effect are identical.
> It could never be tenable that
> Cause and effect are distinct. (20:19)

Why? In this case,

> If the cause and effect are identical
> Generator and generated would be identical.
> If the cause and effect are distinct
> Cause and noncause would be equivalent. (20:20)

Thus if the cause and effect are identical, then the generator and that generated would be identical, but this is not tenable; for how could a father be identical to his son? Also, the seed is not identical to the sprout. But if the cause and effect are distinct, in the sense that "This is the cause," and "That is the effect," then cause and noncause would be equivalent.

Thus if a rice seed is distinct from a barley sprout, and similarly a barley seed is distinct from a rice sprout, [299] then why say "The barley seed is the cause of the barley sprout yet the rice seed is not"? Hence the cause and effect are not identical, but to state they are distinct is also untenable. Those that are not established as identical or distinct are not established because being established as something other than those [possibilities] is untenable.

Moreover, if you ask whether a cause that generates an effect, generates [an effect] that exists by its own intrinsic reality or not, then Nāgārjuna explains:

If the effect existed due to its own intrinsic reality
What would its cause generate?
If the effect did not exist due to its own intrinsic reality
What would be generated by its cause? (20:21)

If the effect existed due to its own intrinsic reality, and it existed since it was fully complete without being produced, what would its cause, that is different from it, generate?

But if you think it generates just that [effect], then that is illogical, for that which has arisen will not arise again. But if the effect did not exist due to its own intrinsic reality, what would be generated by its cause? If the effect did not exist by its own intrinsic reality, yet it was generated by a cause, there is no doubt it would be wrapped in a garland of flowers of the baṭa tree. Hence it is untenable that a cause generates an effect that exists or an effect that does not exist.

If it does not generate [an effect] [300]
It is not tenable that it is a cause. (20:22ab)

If a cause does not generate an effect, it is not tenable that it is a cause. As such, if something is called "a generating cause," and if it became a cause even though it does not generate [an effect], then everything would be a cause, since they would never not be causes, but that is unacceptable. Hence it is not tenable that it is a cause.

If a cause does not exist
Then whose effect would it be? (20:22cd)

If a cause that generates an effect does not exist, as the cause does not exist, whose effect would it be? As such, if you assert it is the effect of a cause, then also that does not exist. If it does not exist, then that called "an effect" is untenable. If it were tenable, then a son would exist without a father, but that also is unacceptable. Hence, if a cause does not exist, an effect also does not exist.

If the assembly of
Causes and conditions

Does not generate itself,
How could it generate an effect? (20:23)

If you wonder whether the assembly of causes and conditions generates an effect, then, first, [the assembly] itself does not generate itself. Why? Because the assembly is understood to be multiple. Master Āryadeva also states:[161]

An assembly is not a single entity.
So too entities do not exist in the least.
If it were other than that, [301]
Then multiple single entities would exist.

Now how could [you] think that an assembly itself, that is itself not arisen and not established, generates an effect? But if the assembly itself, that is itself not arisen, were to generate an effect, then an unborn mother could give birth to a son.

Therefore an effect produced by an assembly,
Or produced by a nonassembly, does not exist.
If an effect does not exist,
How could an assembly of conditions exist? (20:24)

In that case, because the assembly itself is unarisen and not established, therefore an effect produced by an assembly does not exist.

But, in reflecting on this, if you think that an effect is produced by a nonassembly, then in response, an effect produced by a nonassembly does not exist.

When an effect produced by an assembly is not tenable, then how could it be tenable that an effect produced by a nonassembly occurs from a nonexistent cause? If it did, a son would be born without a father and mother; but [such a] son is not born. Hence also an effect produced by a nonassembly does not exist.

161. This citation from Āryadeva not identified. TCE (p. 300): *tshogs pa gcig pu ma yin te, de bzhin dngos po 'ga' yang med, gal te de yang de las gzhan, de yang gcig pu 'ga' zhig yod.*

Objection: What use is this explanation that contradicts [the view of] ordinary beings in many ways? If [their view] is true, then first the assembly of causes and conditions would exist, and since that exists, then effects would also come to exist.

Response: Do you think the lord of the citadel would descend on an empty town? Or do you assert that when an effect does not exist, an assembly exists? That which generates the effect is called "the assembly." When that effect is untenable in any way, [302] then at that time, if the effect does not exist, how could the assembly of conditions exist? Master Āryadeva also states:[162]

> Because all mundane [things] appear
> As just an assembly of names,
> Therefore things do not exist.
> Also the assembly of nonthings does not exist.

Hence since the assembly does not exist because the effect does not exist, it is not tenable to state, "Because time and the effect of the assembly are established, time surely exists."

Objection: If time does not exist, and the cause, effect, and assembly also do not exist, what else exists? Hence you become an advocate of nihilism.

Response: That is not so. You think time and so on exist intrinsically, but it is surely not tenable that they exist in that way, for they are established as dependently imputed.

This is the twentieth chapter, on the Critique of Cause and Effect.

162. This citation from Āryadeva not identified. TCE (p. 302): *gang phyir 'jig rten ji snyed ming, tshogs pa nyid la snang 'gyur ba, de phyir dngos po yod min te, dngos med tshogs pa'ang yod ma yin.*

21. *Critique of Emergence and Destruction*

[Abhidharmikas] object: Time and so on surely exist. Why? Because at a particular time and in a particular place, there are some [things] that emerge and some that are destroyed. As such, if time and so on did not exist, then everything would emerge and be destroyed at all times, everywhere, without distinction. But since that does not happen, therefore time and so on surely do exist.

Response: If some were to emerge and some were to be destroyed, then time and so on [303] also would exist. But Nāgārjuna states:

> Destruction does not exist
> With or without emergence.
> Emergence does not exist
> With or without destruction. (21:1)

At that time, you may ask whether, if emergence and destruction exist, do they exist with or without each other? But when neither are tenable in the least, at that time, how could the time of their cause and so on exist? Why is that? Because that is untenable:

> How could destruction exist
> Without emergence?
> Just as as one who is not born will not die
> There is no destruction without emergence. (21:2)

In that case, how could destruction exist without emergence? If something emerges it will be destroyed but it will not be destroyed without a basis. For example, one who is born will die, but one who is not born will

not die. So too, if something emerges, it will be destroyed, but there is no destruction without emergence.

If, in reflecting on this, you think destruction exists together with emergence, and not separate from emergence, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> How could destruction exist [304]
> Together with emergence?
> They are like death and birth
> That do not exist at the same time. (21:3)

Thus how could destruction exist together with emergence? When these two are mutually incompatible, then it is untenable that these two exist together at the same [time]. For example, they are like death and birth that are mutually incompatible, that therefore do not exist at the same time. Because destruction and emergence are incompatible, they do not exist together.

Objection: If it is untenable that destruction exists separate from emergence and it is untenable they exist together, still, at times, emergence exists even though destruction does not exist, and because it exists, also time and so on exist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> How could emergence exist
> When destruction does not exist?
> Things are never
> Devoid of impermanence. (21:4)

As such, how could emergence exist when destruction does not exist? Since things are never devoid of impermanence, then how could emergence exist without destruction? When all things are related to impermanence due to [being] impermanent, at that time things are never without impermanence. As such, if things were separated from impermanence for even a moment, and in turn [305] they were separated for a long time, even then one cannot assert this, since it follows that they would become permanent. Hence since things are always related to impermanence, emergence without destruction does not exist.

If, on reflecting on this, you think that emergence exists together with destruction and destruction is not nonexistent, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

> How could emergence exist
> Together with destruction?
> They are like birth and death
> That do not exist at the same time. (21:5)

In that case, how could emergence exist together with destruction? When these two are mutually incompatible, at that time it is not tenable that these two exist together as one. For example, they are like birth and death that do not exist at the same time. Because emergence and destruction are incompatible, they do not exist together.

Therefore, if you fully investigate this in this way, [you will see] that it is untenable that emergence and destruction are established [separately] without each other nor together with each other.

> They are not established
> Together with each other
> Nor separate from each other.
> How then could they be established? (21:6) [306]

Emergence and destruction are not established together with each other and not separate from each other. By what other means do you think they are established? Hence emergence and destruction do not exist. If they do not exist, how could time and so on exist?

Objection: Since they endure, there is no error. In this regard, endurance exists between emergence and destruction. Since endurance exists, it is not that emergence and destruction do not exist, and since emergence and destruction do not exist at the same time, therefore there is no error.

Response: That also is untenable. Why? Because things are related to impermanence; therefore, if anything endures it does not remain for even a moment. Therefore Nāgārjuna explains:

Emergence does not exist for the perishable (21:7a)

Because things are never not related to impermanence, they are always related to impermanence, therefore emergence does not exist for things that are perishable. How could endurance exist if there is no emergence?

Objection: Since it does not perish at the time of emerging, therefore emergence exists. Emergence endures, and after enduring it is destroyed.

Nāgārjuna responds:

Also emergence does not exist for the imperishable. (21:7b)

Also, emergence does not exist for that which lacks the characteristic of perishing. Why? Because that is not a thing. As such, since things possess the characteristic of perishing, therefore that which lacks the characteristic of perishing is not a thing.

How could those which are not things [307] emerge? In that regard, since even the designation "emergence" does not exist, therefore emergence does not exist for the imperishable.

Destruction does not exist for the perishable.
Also destruction does not exist for the imperishable. (21:7cd)

As such, because emergence is not tenable for the perishable, then if it doesn't exist for that which emerges, it also does not exist for that which endures. Therefore destruction that does not emerge nor endure does not exist for the perishable, nor does it exist for the imperishable.

Emergence and destruction do not exist for the perishable, they also do not exist for the imperishable, nor do they exist for anything else. Hence, emergence does not exist and destruction also does not exist.

Objection: First things exist, for emergence is established for things, since not emerging is not tenable. Also destruction is established since, for that which exists having emerged from something, destruction definitely exists.

Response: Do you desire the fruit of the rattan palm? Or do you assert the existence of things which have no emergence nor destruction? But by denying emergence and destruction, wouldn't you deny things also? In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

> When emergence and destruction do not exist
> Things do not exist. (21:8ab)

In that case, you may ask whether if some things were to exist, would they possess the property of emergence or they would possess the property of destruction? When emergence and destruction are untenable, then how could it be tenable to say "Things exist"? [308]

> When things do not exist
> Emergence and destruction do not exist (21:8cd)

Thus, because things are not tenable when properly investigated, therefore things do not exist, since emergence and destruction do not exist without a basis. In that regard, it is illogical to state, "If things exist, emergence and destruction also exist."

Moreover, here you may ask "If emergence and destruction exist, then would they exist for a thing which is empty or not empty of intrinsic reality?" Then, in that regard, Nāgārjuna explains:

> Emergence and destruction are untenable
> For that which is empty. (21:9ab)

First, emergence and destruction are untenable for things that are empty of intrinsic reality. Why? Because they do not exist. As such, how would such [attributes] exist for [things] that do not exist due to their own intrinsic reality? Because [the intrinsic] reality [of things] does not exist, the description "This [attribute] of it" would not exist. Thus it may be said, "What arises?" or "What is destroyed?" Hence it is untenable for that which is empty to emerge or be destroyed.

But if, on reflection, you think that emergence and destruction exist for things that are not empty of intrinsic reality, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

Emergence and destruction are also untenable
For that which is not empty. (21:9cd)

It is not tenable that emergence and destruction exist for things [309] that do not exist due to their intrinsic reality because [their] essential nature does not transform. Hence, emergence and destruction are also untenable for that which is not empty.

Moreover, you may ask, if emergence and destruction were to exist, would they be the same or different? Then, Nāgārjuna explains:

It is untenable that emergence
And destruction are the same.
It is untenable that emergence
And destruction are different (21:10)

First, it is untenable that emergence and destruction are the same. Why? On this point emergence refers to birth and destruction refers to aging. Because they are distinct objects, how could two incompatible states be the same? Also, it is untenable that emergence and destruction are different. Why? Because all things epitomize perishing, thus there are no things whatsoever that lack momentariness and impermanence. Therefore all things epitomize perishing. Since it is untenable that things are intrinsically different, it is untenable that they are different from emergence and destruction. Thus, because it is untenable that emergence and destruction are neither the same nor different, emergence and destruction are not tenable.

If you think emergence
And destruction are seen, (21:11ab) [310]

If, in reflecting on this, you think, "What need is there for other [proof], the emergence and destruction of things is tenable, since it it seen by perception itself," then that is illogical. Why? Here Nāgārjuna explains:

Emergence and destruction
Are seen due to delusion (21:11cd)

For those whose minds are obscured and untrained, emergence and

destruction are seen due to delusion. Thus it is untenable that you see emergence and destruction. Why? If emergence and destruction were to exist in that way, then would they depend on things and nonthings? But things and nonthings do not exist. If they do not exist, how could it be logical to see the emergence and destruction of baseless things?

Objection: In what way are things and nonthings nonexistent?

Response: In this regard, you may ask, if things and nonthings exist, would they arise from things and nonthings? Then, in that regard, Nāgārjuna explains:

> A thing does not arise from a thing.
> A nonthing does not arise from a thing.
> A thing does not arise from a nonthing.
> A nonthing does not arise from a nonthing. (21:12)

In that regard, a thing does not arise from a thing. Thus a vase does not arise from clay that definitely endures. But if you think that a vase arises fashioned from clay, [311] then even in that case if clay has been fashioned [into a vase] and has ceased, then since the vase arises, the thing [that is a vase] does not arise from the thing [that is clay]. As such, that which has ceased and is nonexistent is not a thing because it is an object distinct from things and nonthings.

But if, on reflection, you think that a thing that is clay is a vase, then even in that case a thing does not arise from a thing because another thing different from clay does not arise, because the clay itself is called the vase.

But, on reflection, if you think that a thing that is [a piece of] fruit arises from a thing that is a fruit tree, then that also is incorrect. Why? Because it is not tenable that a fruit tree is different [or separate] from the fruit. Thus first a thing does not arise from a thing.

Also, a nonthing[163] does not arise from a thing. Thus a broken vase does not arise from a viable vase because that which is viable is not broken. A broken vase also does not arise from a thing that is a vase because that which is broken and nonexistent is not a thing.

163. A nonthing here refers to a nonfunctional thing.

But, in reflecting on this, if you think a vase that is a nonthing arises from a thing that is a hammer, then that also is incorrect.

Thus if a nonthing[164] were to arise from a hammer, a nonexistent vase would also arise. If a nonthing arises, it would not be a nonthing because it arises. Who would believe the statement "That which does not arise in the least arises"? Hence a nonthing does not arise from a thing.

Also, a thing does not arise from a nonthing. Thus a vase does not arise from clay that has ceased because that which has ceased does not exist.

But if it were to arise from a thing that has ceased and is nonexistent, then that is unacceptable since the arising of a thing would not possess a cause because everything would eternally arise from everything, [312] and all endeavor would be pointless.

Hence a thing does not arise from a nonthing and a nonthing also does not arise from a nonthing. Thus a vase that is a nonthing does not arise from a nonthing, for a vase that is a nonthing is merely a nonvase.[165] Because [such a vase] does not exist in the least, what would be the purpose of generating it? But if that which does not exist in the least were to arise from that which does not exist in the least, then even the horns of a rabbit would arise from the horns of a horse!

But if a nonthing were something, then because it is something, it would be a thing and not a nonthing. Hence also a nonthing does not arise from a nonthing.

Moreover you may ask, if a thing arises, does it arise from itself, or from another, or from both? Then, in that regard, Nāgārjuna explains:

> A thing does not arise from itself.
> It does not arise from another
> It does not arise from itself and another.
> If it does not exist, how could it arise? (21:13)

First, a thing does not arise from itself because it is pointless to investigate whether that which exists due to its own self [needs to] arise again because the error of infinite regress would ensue. Because it is untenable to apply the term "from itself" to that which does not exist due to its own self; hence a thing does not arise from itself.

164. A nonthing here refers to a nonexistent thing.
165. A nonvase here refers to a nonexistent vase.

A thing does not arise from another because "another" is untenable relative to things that have not arisen and do not exist. Thus if something exists also another would exist. But [something] does not exist, and if it doesn't exist [313] how could another exist? But if [something] did [exist], then since it would [already] be a thing, what use is there for an existent [thing] to arise again? Therefore investigating such arising is pointless. Hence since it does not arise, surely another does not exist.

A thing does not arise from itself or another because both errors just raised would follow. Hence things also do not arise from both.

If a thing does not arise from itself, another, or both, what else do you think it arises from? Hence things are not tenable. If things do not exist, what thing becomes nonexistent? If things and nonthings do not exist, then since they lack a basis, how could emergence and destruction come to exist? Moreover, Nāgārjuna explains:

> If one accepts that things exist,
> The view of eternalism or nihilism
> Would ensue because things
> Would be permanent or impermanent. (21:14)

If you have the view that things [are real], then here another great error would also arise because if one accepts that things exist, the view of eternalism or nihilism would ensue. How is that? Because in fact, what exists would [either be] permanent or impermanent. And if you accept that things exist, they would be permanent or impermanent because anything else is untenable.

Thus, first, if a thing were permanent, the error of eternalism would ensue, or if it were impermanent, the error of nihilism would ensue. But [such views] are unacceptable because they entail great error.

Objection:

> Though one accepts that things exist [314]
> This is not nihilism nor eternalism. (21:15ab)

Thus though one accepts that things exist, it does not follow that this is the view of eternalism, nor does it follow this is the view of nihilism.

Since you do not clearly understand this textual system, your view as such collapses. Thus, if one accepts things exist, and if the error of eternalism and nihilism arose, then existence would not be tenable. Why? Because eternalism would be viable and nihilism would not apply. But if you have the view that things [are real], then the errors of eternalism and nihilism would not ensue, since existence would be tenable. In what way?

> Existence is the continuum of emergence
> And destruction of the effect and the cause. (21:15cd)

As such, existence is the continuum of emergence and destruction of the effect and the cause. In that regard, because the cause is destroyed, therefore the error of eternalism does not follow. Because the effect arises from the cause as it ceases, therefore the error of nihilism does not follow. Thus, even though one accepts that things exist because existence exists, the errors of eternalism and nihilism do not follow.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the continuum of emergence and destruction
> Of the effect and the cause were existence,
> It follows that the cause would be annihilated
> Because that which is destroyed will not arise again. (21:16) [315]

If the continuum of the emergence and destruction of the effect and the cause were existence, then in that case definitely [the extreme of] nihilism would follow for you. Why? Because that which is destroyed will not arise again, for if its cause has thus ceased, it will not arise again. Thus because it does not arise again if its cause has ceased, it follows that the cause would be completely annihilated.

Objection: That is not so because the causal path is not distinct from the effect. Thus it is untenable that the effect is different from the cause. But you also assert:

Whatever arises in dependence on something,
First it is not that,
But neither is it distinct from that.
Therefore it is neither annihilated nor eternal. (18:10)

Therefore because the effect is not different from the cause, the cause is not annihilated.

Nāgārjuna responds: Indeed, I have said that, but you have not understood the reality that supports that [statement]. As such, if a thing ceases and the thing itself arises, how could those two not be the same or different?

In that case, if at a specific time the cause abandons the causal state and transitions to a resultant state, then that itself is a cause, and that subsequent state completely ends the transformation. For example, an actor who discards one costume and puts on another completely ends [the first role] through changing into a different costume. The actor is not different, but the costumes are different. Just as he [remains] an actor, though [that cause] has transitioned to another state, if it is a cause, why wouldn't it remain just that?

But, on reflection, you may think that the cause ceases and does not transition to another state, and when the cause ceases, it transforms into an effect. But even in that case, when one has ceased and another has arisen, then at that time, how could it not transform into something else? [316]

For us, things are dependently imputed, empty of intrinsic reality, like an illusion, mirage, and a reflection. Things transform into what? Things transform from what? As such, their transformation into something else does not exist. Hence if one has the view that things [are real], then because a ceased cause would not arise again, it follows their continuum would be annihilated. Moreover,

If things exist due to their intrinsic reality
It would be illogical for things to be nonexistent. (21:17ab)

If things exist due to their intrinsic reality, it would be illogical for things that exist due to their intrinsic reality to become nonexistent. Why? Because [their] essential nature would not transform. Therefore, if you hold the view that things [are real], it would be untenable for the cause to cease, and also

it would be untenable for the effect to cease because those that arise and cease would end. In that regard, surely the error of eternalism would follow. Moreover,

> When nirvana is attained nihilism would ensue
> Because the continuum of existence is fully pacified (21:17cd)

When nirvana is attained, surely the fault of annihilation would ensue, because the continuum of existence of an arhat is fully pacified. Hence if you think the continuum of existence exists, then surely the errors of eternalism or nihilism would follow.

Objection: First, the continuum of existence is fully established. When nirvana is attained, the continuum of existence of an arhat stops, but this does not harm our [view], for when nirvana is attained, then it is easily [understood] that [the continuum of existence] is severed. [317]

Response: You say, "If the continuum of existence exists, the error of eternalism and nihilism does not follow," but it has already been taught that if the continuum of existence exists, then just the errors of eternalism and nihilism follow. First, to state "The continuum of existence is fully established" is illogical, for the continuum of existence is surely not tenable in any way. Why? Nāgārjuna explains:

> The last [moment of existence] that has ceased
> Does not link with the first [moment of] existence. (21:18ab)

The [last moment of] mind engaging one's present existence is here the last [moment of] existence. The first [moment of] mind arising in one's future existence is here the first [moment of] existence. In that regard, at this specific time the last [moment of] existence that has ceased does not link with the first [moment of] existence because the last [moment of] existence that has not ceased does not exist. Thus how could a thing arise from a thing that has ceased and does not exist? But if, the last moment [of existence] had ceased, yet the first moment [of existence] were to arise, then in that case since it would arise without a cause, that cannot be accepted, for numerous errors would ensue.

If, on reflection, you think that the last [moment of] existence that has not ceased links with the first [moment of] existence, then Nāgārjuna addresses this point:

> The last [moment of] existence that has not ceased
> Does not link with the first [moment of] existence (21:18cd)

Also the last [moment of] existence that has not ceased does not link with the first [moment of] existence. Why? Because it follows that there would be two existences, and the error of something emerging [318] without a cause would ensue.

Objection: Indeed the last [moment of] existence that has ceased or not ceased does not link with the first [moment of] existence; however, it links with that now ceasing.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the last [moment] that is now ceasing
> Were to arise as the first [moment],
> That which is now ceasing would be one [existence],
> And that which is arising would be another. (21:19)

If the last [moment of] existence that is now ceasing linked with the first [moment of] existence, because that which is now ceasing has half ceased and that which is arising has half arisen, the error would ensue that those two comprise two existences because [both] that which is ceasing and that which is arising, exist.

Objection: What use is it to state, "The last [moment of] existence that has ceased or is ceasing links with the first [moment of] existence"? If it exists at that specific time, the arising of the first [moment of] existence would exist, and since that exists, the continuum of existence would also be tenable.

Nāgārjuna responds:

If that now ceasing does not
Link together with that now arising,
Then birth would occur in those aggregates
Where one had died. (21:20)

The term "link together" refers in brief to the last [moment of] existence that has ceased or has not ceased.

If you say, "The last [moment of] existence that is now ceasing does not link together with [319] the first [moment of] existence that is now arising; the last [moment of] existence that has not ceased does not link with the first [moment of] existence; so too the last [moment of] existence that has ceased does not link with the first [moment of] existence, but still the arising of the first [moment of] existence exists," then it follows that birth would occur in just those aggregates where one had died because birth elsewhere is untenable. But that also is not acceptable. Hence, it is untenable that existence occurs except for those three [possibilities].

In that case it is not logical that
The continuum of existence exists in the three times.
If it does not exist in the three times
How could the continuum of existence be tenable? (21:21)

Therefore in that case, if thoroughly investigated, it is not logical that the continuum of existence [exists] in the three times because it is not tenable that the last [moment of] existence that has ceased, or not ceased, or is now ceasing links with the first [moment of] existence. [If] the continuum of existence does not exist in the three times, how could the continuum of existence be tenable? If the continuum of existence does not exist, how could emergence and destruction exist? If emergence and destruction do not exist, how could time and so on be established for you?

This is the twenty-first chapter, on the Critique of Emergence and Destruction. [320]

22. *Critique of the Tathāgata*

[Abhidharmikas] object: The continuum of existence surely exists. Why? Because the Tathāgata exists. The Tathāgata is the Bhagavān, the Arhat, the Perfect Complete Buddha. He has accomplished perfect enlightenment after countless eons. In fact, in different sūtras he said: "In that life, at that time, I was the Brahmin youth called Sudṛsh. In that life, at the time, I was the king called Māndhātṛ." If there was no continuum of existence, that would be untenable; therefore the continuum of existence surely exists!

Response: If a tathāgata were possible, the continuum of existence would also exist. But since a tathāgata is not possible, how could the continuum of his existence exist? In what way? On this point you may ask, if those called "tathāgatas" exist, then are they the aggregates or something other than the aggregates? In this regard, Nāgārjuna says:

> The Tathāgata is not the body, nor different from the body.
> It does not exist in him, nor he in it,
> And the Tathāgata does not possess a body.
> What then is this Tathāgata? (22:1)

(1) First, the Tathāgata is not the aggregates. Why? Because, in consequence, the Tathāgata would be impermanent because the aggregates possess the attributes of emergence and destruction; and it is untenable that the appropriator and that appropriated are the same.

(2) The Tathāgata also [321] does not exist as a separate phenomenon devoid of the aggregates and different from the aggregates. Why? Because in consequence he would be permanent because he is a phenomenon incompatible with impermanent aggregates; and it follows that if they were

different this would be apprehended. Since this is not apprehended therefore the Tathāgata also is not different from the aggregates.

(3) The aggregates do not exist in the Tathāgata like a forest of trees in the snow. Why? Because in consequence, [the Tathāgata] would be impermanent because the support and that supported would not be different.[166]

(4) The Tathāgata does not exist in the aggregates like a lion in a forest of trees. Why? Because the [previous] error just taught would apply.

(5) The Tathāgata does not possess aggregates like possessing the pith of a tree. Why? Because the error [of the Tathāgata] being impermanent would arise because he would not be different from the aggregates.

As such, when examined in [these] five ways, it is impossible that the Tathāgata appropriates [aggregates]. If so, can you—who have thoroughly examined his continuum of existence and how it exists—please state what is this Tathāgata?

Objection: Do I say the aggregates themselves are the Tathāgata or the Tathāgata is different from the aggregates? Why do you credit me with the error that in consequence he is permanent or impermanent? Since I say the Tathāgata is imputed in dependence on the aggregates, I do not say "That which is dependently imputed is the same or different from that appropriated." Therefore because I do not say they are the same, the error of impermanence does not arise. Because I do not say they are different, the error of permanence does not arise.

Response: Do you [now] dance, [satisfied] your analysis is well applied, [322] or do you say the Tathāgata is dependently imputed? Still you assert the Tathāgata is established intrinsically. Yet Nāgārjuna explains:

> If the Buddha depends on the aggregates
> He does not exist intrinsically. (22:2ab)

If the Buddha is imputed in dependence on the aggregates, does this

166. TCE (p. 321) states *gangs la shing ljon pa'i nags tshal* ("a forest of trees in the snow"). According to this example, if the aggregates (the forest) exist in the Tathāgata (the snow), then the Tathāgata would be the support or basis and the aggregates would be that supported on that basis. The Peking and Narthang editions (TCE p. 321 note 2) state *gang la shing ljon pa'i nags tshal* ("a forest of trees in a place").

mean the Buddha does not exist intrinsically? Or if he exists intrinsically, what use is dependent imputation? That which is just its [own intrinsic] nature is imputed by that alone. But because [the Tathāgata] has no intrinsic reality, therefore what is imputed due to appropriating [aggregates]? Hence the Tathāgata does not exist intrinsically.

> How could one who does not
> Exist intrinsically, exist extrinsically? (22:2cd)

But do you think the Tathāgata who does not exist intrinsically exists extrinsically?

Objection: He [exists] through other things, since the Tathāgata is imputed in dependence on the transformation of the appropriated [aggregates]. Therefore the Tathāgata exists in dependence on other things.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> It is not tenable that which depends on
> Extrinsic reality has an intrinsic self. (22:3ab)

It is not tenable to say that that which is imputed in dependence on extrinsic reality has an intrinsic self. Why? Because it is not established from itself. [323]

> How could one who lacks an intrinsic self
> Become a tathāgata? (22:3cd)

How could a tathāgata, who lacks an intrinsic self, who is imputed due to the transformation of the appropriated [aggregates,] become a tathāgata?

If an intrinsic self does not exist, yet an intrinsic self arises in dependence on the appropriated [aggregates], then it would have arisen in dependence on the appropriated [aggregates]. But that is unacceptable because the error of being impermanent and so on would ensue. Moreover,

> If he has no intrinsic reality,
> How could he exist extrinsically?

Apart from intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality,
What is the tathāgata? (22:4)

If the Tathāgata has no intrinsic reality, and he does not exist intrinsically, how could he exist extrinsically? As such, if that which is distinct from intrinsic reality is called "extrinsic reality," then in dependence on what would that which does not exist by its own intrinsic reality have an extrinsic reality? Hence extrinsic reality also does not exist.

However, apart from intrinsic reality and extrinsic reality, please state what is the Tathāgata and due to what is he imputed.

Objection: You speak of various illogical conclusions you have reached through not understanding the meaning of dependent imputation. But you will never fully understand the meaning of reality by just scoffing at the words of others. [Your] statement, "Does that which is imputed in dependence on the tathāgatas [324] exist intrinsically or extrinsically?" cannot rebut this.

Response: In the world it is said:

Any act committed by demons
Is something committed by children.

This is really true, for [you think] I[167] do not understand the meaning of dependent imputation, and you take the opposite view. But whatever you impute as an existent Tathāgata, it is untenable that is the appropriated aggregates. In what way? Nāgārjuna explains:

If one [called the] Tathāgata were to exist
Without depending on the aggregates,
From now on he would depend on them,
Reliant on arising through such dependence. (22:5)

If prior to the existence of the appropriator of the aggregates one called the Tathāgata were to exist, and if he was to appropriate the aggregates,

167. The Tibetan term *kho bo* refers either to "I" or to "he" depending on context. Here it appears to refer either to "I" or to Buddhapālita as the author, instead of to "he" Nāgārjuna.

then the Tathāgata would exist reliant on arising through dependence [on the aggregates]. Further, for one who has arisen, he is solely made evident by the aggregates.

> There is no Tathāgata whatsoever
> Not dependent on the aggregates.
> If he does not exist without depending [on the aggregates]
> How could he come to appropriate them? (22:6)

It is not tenable whatsoever that there is a Tathāgata not dependent on the aggregates. [325] If he does not exist without depending on the aggregates, how could he come to appropriate the aggregates since he would not exist?

Objection: What use is an explanation that contradicts the textual tradition? Thus, since the Bhagavān has stated, "Samsara has no beginning or end," how could it be tenable that the appropriating agent and that appropriated exist as prior and later states? Since it is always associated with appropriation it is something that is imputed.

Response: If, since samsara has no beginning and no end, and it is untenable that the appropriating agent and that appropriated exist as prior and later states, then it would be untenable to state that the Tathāgata is the appropriating agent and the aggregates are that appropriated. Why? Thus Nāgārjuna explains:

> Without the appropriated
> There is no appropriation at all.
> Without appropriation
> There is no Tathāgata at all. (22:7)

In this regard, since that appropriated exists, "appropriation" exists. Since something appropriates, "the appropriator exists." Because of that, the appropriator is not that appropriated nor is it appropriation, and that appropriated does not appropriate nor is it the appropriator.

If samsara has no beginning and end, then to say "This is appropriated" or "This appropriates" is untenable. Thus, if earlier and later states do not exist,

please state how your aggregates are appropriated and how the Tathāgata that is fully investigated by you is the appropriator. Hence if earlier and later states do not exist, then the appropriator [326] is untenable, and that appropriated is untenable.

Objection: But this is not tenable. Why? Because they cannot be described as "the same" and "different," for the appropriator and that appropriated cannot be described as "the same" and "different." First [the appropriator] cannot be described as "the same" because the term for the agent is distinct [from it]. Also, [that appropriated] cannot be described as "different" because [the appropriator and that appropriated] are not established as separate. Hence both exist, but they cannot be described as "the same" and "different"!

Response: Do you accept your enemy as a witness out of goodwill, or do you raise this solely due to [my] denial of the appropriator and that appropriated being established? Then due to that alone [you claim] they are established!

As such, if that appropriated and the appropriator existed, there is no doubt they would be [either] identical or distinct. But how could that which does not exist as identical or distinct be different? Hence that which does not exist as that appropriated also does not exist as the appropriator.

Even if the appropriator and that appropriated were described conventionally, then they must be described as neither "the same" nor "different," and they must be viewed in this way. Otherwise, how could the self of the Tathāgata and the selflessness of appropriation be differentiated? Master Āryadeva also states:[168]

> Because form has no self,
> Therefore the self is different from form.
> Just as, though cold and hot are different;
> It is incorrect to say they don't exist.

168. This citation from Āryadeva not identified. TCE (p. 326): *gang phyir gzugs la bdag med pa, de phyir gzugs las bdag gzhan 'gyur, grang dang tsha ba tha dad nyid, med ces brjod par mi rung bzhin.*

But even if the appropriator exists, then in that case Nāgārjuna explains:

> If one examines this in five ways, [327]
> How could the Tathāgata
> Who is neither the same nor different [from the aggregates]
> Be imputed due to appropriation? (22:8)

If one examines in five ways[169] what tathāgata is imputed due to what [process of] appropriation, then he is described as neither the same nor different [from the aggregates]. If he doesn't exist due to appropriation, how could it be said, "The Tathāgata exists"? Hence even dependent imputation and existence would be untenable.

Objection: For as long as the five aggregates that are "appropriated" are observed as actually existent,[170] for that long, how could they be nonexistent? Therefore, first appropriation exists, and since a chariot cannot move without a driver, an appropriator also exists.

Response: What! If you were carried away by a strong current, would you clutch at an uprooted [straw]? Or do you assert that appropriated establishes the appropriator? At this point Nāgārjuna explains:

> That which is appropriated
> Does not exist intrinsically. (22:9ab)

If you think "that which is appropriated exists," then also it does not exist intrinsically because it arises dependently.

Objection: First, that exists. Even though it does not exist intrinsically, it exists extrinsically.

Nāgārjuna responds:

169. The five ways are delineated in terms of the Tathāgata in verse 22:1 (abc): "The Tathāgata (1) is not the body, (2) nor different from the body, (3) they [i.e., the aggregates] do not exist in him, (4) nor he in them, and (5) the Tathāgata does not possess a body."
170. TCE (p. 327) states *sngon du dmigs pa*. Here I follow the Peking version (p. 327 note 2), which states: *mngon du dmigs pa*.

Anything that does not exist intrinsically
Never exists extrinsically.[171] (22:9cd)

Any appropriation that does not exist intrinsically never exists extrinsically. [328] Even if some with intrinsic reality did exist, then since appropriation does not exist intrinsically, therefore other states would not exist. If other states do not exist, how could other states exist in dependence on them? Hence appropriation does not exist extrinsically.

Those who say "I directly perceived this" see falsely with minds completely confused, like seeing an illusion or seeing dream images. [Such seeing] is not valid in the least because conceiving such images to be true is to be abandoned. The Bhagavān has given examples of illusions such as a mass of foam, water bubbles, a mirage, and the trunk of a plantain tree. He also said that such illusions delude children because [illusory objects] do not exist.

Thus, that appropriated and the appropriator
Are empty in every respect.
How can an empty tathāgata
Be imputed [on them] since they are empty? (22:10)

Thus because appropriation also does not exist intrinsically nor does it exist extrinsically, therefore appropriation is empty. Because when the appropriator is investigated in every respect, it does not exist intrinsically, also it does not exist extrinsically, therefore the appropriator is also empty.

Thus, please state how an [329] empty tathāgata can be imputed to exist, since [aggregates] that are appropriated are empty of intrinsic reality and lack a core essence—like foam, water bubbles, a mirage, the trunk of a plantain tree, and an illusion? [The Tathāgata] is empty of a core essence and intrinsic reality like an illusory person, dream [image], reflection, and city of gandharvas.

Hence first abandon attachment to oneself, for existence is imputed in dependence on that. Then abandon existence and nonexistence that are dependent on that. Be attentive to one's ignorance of the meaning of depen-

171. TCE (p. 327) states *bzhin* instead of *gzhan* in the root text, but *gzhan* correctly in the commentary.

dent imputation through [awareness of] the two modes of imputation: "Since this exists, that occurs" and "Since this does not exist, that does not occur," for this is established as the middle way.

Thus the meaning of dependent imputation is any thing that is dependently imputed, that is not described as "existent" or "nonexistent," because it is utterly empty of intrinsic reality. But conventional terminology is not in error.

Objection: Even when you don't say "All these are empty," aren't you saying "All these are empty," for you fearlessly praise [emptiness] in secret!

Response: To say "I do not say [all these] are empty," is to say very little, for Nāgārjuna explains:

> Do not say "It is empty."
> Also do not say "It is not empty,"
> Do not say "It is both" or "It is neither."
> This is said for the purpose of instruction. (22:11)

Do not say "It is empty," also do not say "It is not empty." Also do not say "It is empty and not empty" or "It is not empty and not nonempty." This is said in order to abandon conceptualization of the unreal for the purpose of instruction about the reality [330] of the ultimate. Also it is said below:

> The ultimate cannot be taught
> Without depending on conventional activity.
> Nirvana cannot be obtained
> Without depending on the ultimate. (24:10)

Master Āryadeva also states:[172]

> If things exist due to their essential nature,
> What use is it to see emptiness?

172. CŚ, xvi:23. TCE (p. 330): *gal te dngos po rang bzhin yod, stong mthong yon tan ci zhig yod, rtog pas bcings pa mthong bas na, 'dir ni de nyid dgag par bya.* Derge (D 3846: 183a): *gal te rang bzhin gyis dngos yod, stong mthong yon tan ci zhig yod, rtog pas mthong ba 'ching ba ste, de ni 'di ru dgag par bya.*

Through seeing that conception binds,
One puts a stop to it now. (xvi:23)

Objection: If the Tathāgata does not exist intrinsically, he also cannot exist extrinsically. Why, then, is it said that permanence and impermanence, [possessing] an end and lacking an end, and so on, are indescribable? I think it is logical to state in all clarity, "The Tathāgata does not exist." But how could it be logical to say, "The Tathāgata that is something dependently imputed exists, or does not exist"?

Response: Thus if the Tathāgata exists, and if it is logical that he only exists without appropriating [aggregates], then he would exist without appropriation. But it should be said: "How could something that lacks appropriation and does not exist, exist?" Further, "How could the Tathāgata, who is dependently imputed, not exist? Thus the udumvāra flower that does not exist [at all] would not exist as an imputed state.

Hence, because first the Tathāgata does not exist intrinsically nor does he exist extrinsically, therefore Nāgārjuna explains:

How could [the Tathāgata] who has pacified [intrinsic reality]
Be the four such as permanent, impermanent, and so on? [331]
How could [the Tathāgata] who has pacified [intrinsic reality]
Be the four such as having an end, having no end, and so on?
(22:12)

How could it be tenable that the Tathāgata, who is empty of intrinsic reality and has pacified intrinsic reality be any of the four, such as being permanent, impermanent, and so on? These include (1) the Tathāgata is permanent, (2) the Tathāgata is impermanent, (3) the Tathāgata is both permanent and impermanent, and (4) the Tathāgata is neither permanent nor impermanent.

How could it be tenable that the Tathāgata has an end, the Tathāgata has no end, the Tathāgata has both an end and no end, and the Tathāgata has neither an end nor no end?

What is one called "the Tathāgata," who is free from an intrinsic or extrinsic reality? What is one who is free from permanence or impermanence, and so on? Because he is imputed in dependence on the aggregates, therefore it

cannot be stated "The Tathāgata does not exist." As such, how could that which is dependently imputed be nonexistent? It is stated below:

> In that case, [the self] is not different from
> That appropriated, nor is it that appropriated.
> The self does not exist without appropriation.
> Neither is it ascertained as nonexistent. (27:8)

Therefore, as such, the Tathāgata is free from the philosophic positions of existence and nonexistence. The Tathāgata, who is not dependent on this life, cannot be observed by those whose minds are fully entangled by delusion, for he is hidden from their eyes. [332]

> Whoever holds rigid ideas
> About one who has attained nirvana,
> Who thinks the Tathāgata exists or does not exist,
> Engages in conceptuality. (22:13)

Whoever holds rigid ideas, such as "This is the truth—the rest is meaningless," who applies [such ideas] to the Tathāgata, who has attained nirvana, and thus thinks the Tathāgata exists, or the Tathāgata does not exist, engages in conceptuality.

Thus, to say (1) the Tathāgata exists after attaining nirvana, or (2) the Tathāgata does not exist after attaining nirvana, or (3) the Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after attaining nirvana, or (4) the Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after attaining nirvana, is to engage in conceptuality.

Since the lamp of knowledge of dependent origination of a great being illuminates, it benefits the eye of wisdom and one sees things correctly just as they are.

> It is not tenable to think
> One who is empty of intrinsic reality,
> Who is the Buddha, either exists or
> Does not exist after attaining nirvana. (22:14)

It is not tenable to think that the Tathāgata, who is empty of intrinsic and extrinsic reality, like an illusion, a reflection, [333] and an emanation, who is

the Bhagavān Buddha, exists after attaining nirvana, or does not exist after attaining nirvana. As such, the Bhagavān has said:

> Nanda, if you do not see the Tathāgata in this way, in this life
> you will experience bliss.

For those who say the Tathāgata exists after he has attained nirvana, or the Tathāgata does not exist after he has attained nirvana:

> The Buddha transcends mental fabrication
> And does not perish. Those who fabricate [existence]
> Degenerate through mental fabrication,
> And cannot see the Tathāgata. (22:15)

Therefore, as such, the Bhagavān Buddha perfectly transcends all mundane mental fabrication, and does not perish. For those who mentally fabricate existence and nonexistence, impermanence and permanence, and so on, their the eye of pristine wisdom degenerates due to mental fabrication and cannot see the Tathāgata, just as one who is blind [cannot see] the sun.

The Tathāgata resides in a state that transcends the world, how then would those who fabricate worldly states, such as existence, be capable of seeing him? The words "does not perish" mean "he does not go," as it is said "In not going his footsteps cannot be traced." Hence, since the Tathāgata lacks intrinsic existence, to say "The continuum of existence exists because the Tathāgata exists" [334] is illogical.

In that respect, the cosmos has two types: (1) the cosmos of beings and (2) the cosmos of formations. Thus, one should understand that by investigating the Tathāgata, one investigates the cosmos of beings, and by investigating the Tathāgata, one also investigates the cosmos of formations. Why? Thus,

> That which is the intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata
> Is the intrinsic reality of beings. (22:16ab)

Because that which is the intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata is also the intrinsic reality of beings, therefore investigating the Tathāgata is also investigating beings.

Objection: What is the intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> The Tathāgata has no intrinsic reality,
> Beings have no intrinsic reality. (22:16cd)

In what way? Because the Tathāgata is imputed in dependence on [his] aggregates, and not established from his own self, therefore he has no intrinsic reality. Also, beings are imputed in dependence on their [aggregates], and since they are not established in the least from themselves, therefore beings are like the Tathāgata and have no intrinsic reality. Because he has no intrinsic reality, then:

> How could [the Tathāgata] who has pacified [intrinsic reality]
> Be the four such as permanent, impermanent, and so on?
> How could [the Tathāgata] who has pacified [intrinsic reality]
> Be the four such as he has an end, he has no end, and so on?
> (22:12)

Objection: That is not so, for you said conditioned phenomena are only impermanent, while you do not say that the Tathāgata is impermanent. How could it be tenable to state:

> That which is the intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata
> Is [335] the intrinsic reality of beings (22:16ab)

Response: In this regard it is said below:

> The Dharma taught by the buddhas
> Is based on the two truths:
> Mundane conventional truth
> And ultimate truth. (24:8)

In that regard, since they are mundane conventional truths, one may say, "The vase exists," or "The bamboo mat exists," and due to being impermanent, one may say, "The vase is broken," or "The bamboo mat is burning."

But if the bamboo mat alone is real, and it is untenable that the vase and the bamboo mat are dependent imputations, how then could [the vase] being broken or [the bamboo mat] being burned be tenable?

Moreover, regarding the Tathāgata, due to the power of mundane convention, some say, "The Tathāgata ages," or "The Tathāgata attains nirvana," and also they say, "He is impermanent." But when contemplating the ultimate, if at that time the Tathāgata is not tenable, then how could his aging and attainment of nirvana be tenable? Therefore, any intrinsic reality of the Tathāgata would also be the intrinsic reality of beings. For this reason, the inquiry into the cosmos of beings is also established as the inquiry into the cosmos of formations.

This is the twenty-second chapter, on the Critique of the Tathāgata. [336]

23. *Critique of Misconception*

Section Nine

[Abhidharmikas] object:

> It is said attachment, aversion, and delusion
> Arise from conceptuality
> Since they fully arise in dependence on
> Attraction, repulsion, and misconception. (23:1)

In this regard, it is said at length in sūtra that attachment, aversion, and delusion arise from conceptuality, since they fully arise in dependence on attraction, repulsion, and misconception. Therefore attachment, aversion, and delusion exist.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> What arises in dependence on
> Attraction, repulsion, and misconception
> Does not intrinsically exist.
> Therefore the afflictions are not real. (23:2)

What arises in that way from conceptuality in dependence on attraction, repulsion, and misconception does not intrinsically exist. Therefore afflictions are not real. Moreover,

> The existence or nonexistence
> Of the self is not established in any way. [337]
> If that does not exist how could the existence
> Or nonexistence of the afflictions be established? (23:3)

The existence or nonexistence of the self is not established in any way by any means. If that self does not exist, how could the existence or nonexistence of the afflictions be established? Why?

> These afflictions belong to someone
> But that [being] is not established. (23:4ab)

These afflictions belong to someone. But that [being] to whom these afflictions belong is not established in the least.

> If that [being] does not exist, what then exists,
> For the afflictions do not exist in the least. (23:4cd)

If those afflictions that belong to someone do not exist, and if that [being] does not exist, what, then, exists? For the afflictions do not exist in the least.

But if you think that afflictions exist for someone who is nonexistent, for those [afflictions] belong to no one at all, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> Just as one views one's body, the afflictions
> Do not exist in the afflicted in five ways.[173]
> Just as one views one's body, the afflicted
> Do not exist in the afflictions in five ways. (23:5)

Just as one views one's own body, [for the self] does not exist in the five aggregates in [any of] the five ways, [338] so too the afflictions also do not exist in afflicted minds in [any of] the five ways.

Just as one views one's own body, [for the self] does not exist in the five aggregates in [any of] the five ways, so too the afflicted mind also does not exist in the afflictions in [any of] the five ways. Moreover,

> Attraction, repulsion, and misconception
> Do not intrinsically exist.
> What afflictions arise in dependence on
> Attraction, repulsion, and misconception? (23:6)

173. For the five ways, see verse 22:1.

As attraction, repulsion, and misconception do not intrinsically exist, attraction, repulsion, and falsity are not real. That which is not real does not exist, and if attraction, repulsion, and misconception do not exist, then those afflictions that arise in dependence on them do not [exist]. How could the afflictions caused by them exist?

Objection:

> The six types, form, sound, taste, tactility,
> And smell, and phenomena
> Are distinguished as the basis of
> Attachment, aversion, and delusion (23:7)

The six types [of object], form, sound, taste, tactility, smell, and phenomena, are distinguished as the basis of attachment, aversion, and delusion. If those bases exist, [339] since attraction, repulsion, and misconception occur; therefore attachment, aversion, and delusion occur in dependence on attraction, repulsion, and misconception.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> Form, sound, taste, tactility,
> Smell, and phenomena are just
> Like a city of gandharvas,
> A mirage, and a dream. (23:8)

> Since they are like illusory beings
> And similar to reflections
> How could they be
> Attractive or repulsive? (23:9)

Form, sound, taste, tactility, smell, and phenomena lack intrinsic existence, they are unencumbered, unmixed, and nothing in themselves. They are like a city of gandharvas, a mirage, and a dream. Therefore, since they are like illusory beings and similar to reflections, how could they be attractive or repulsive? Moreover,

The attractive is made known
In dependence on the repulsive.
Since the attractive cannot exist independently
Therefore the attractive is not tenable. (23:10) [340]

In dependence on the repulsive, the attractive is made known. Since the attractive cannot exist without prior dependence on the repulsive, therefore the attractive is not tenable.

The repulsive is made known
In dependence on the attractive.
Since the repulsive cannot exist independently
Therefore the repulsive is not tenable. (23:11)

In dependence on the attractive, the repulsive is made known. Since the repulsive cannot exist independently, therefore the repulsive is not tenable.

If the attractive does not exist
How could attachment occur?
If the repulsive does not exist
How could aversion occur? (23:12)

If the attractive does not exist, how could attachment occur, and if the repulsive does not exist, how could aversion also occur?

Objection: Since the four misconceptions regarding permanence and so on are mentioned in sūtra, therefore misconceptions exist, since such [statements] exist. As such, that which apprehends the impermanent to be permanent is a misconception, but that which apprehends the impermanent to be impermanent is not a misconception. The remainder are similar.

Nāgārjuna responds:

If apprehending the impermanent [341]
To be permanent is a misconception,
Then since that which is empty is not permanent
How could such apprehension not be a misconception? (23:13)

If you think that apprehending the impermanent to be permanent is not a misconception, then this should be explained [as follows]. Since that which is empty of intrinsic reality is not permanent in the least, then how could such apprehension not be a misconception, if [its object] doesn't exist? The remainder are similar.

> If [you think] apprehending the impermanent
> To be impermanent[174] is not a misconception,
> Then since that which is empty is not impermanent
> How could such apprehension not be a misconception? (23:14)

If you think that apprehending the impermanent to be "impermanent" is not a misconception, then this should be explained [as follows]. Since that which is empty of intrinsic reality is not impermanent in the least, how could such apprehension not be a misconception, if [its object] doesn't exist? The remainder are similar.

> The means by which one apprehends, what apprehends,
> The apprehender, and that apprehended,
> All these are fully pacified.
> Therefore, apprehension does not exist. (23:15) [342]

The means by which one apprehends is the instrument. What apprehends is the thing [engaging in action]. That which is the apprehender is the agent. That apprehended is the object. All these are fully pacified, since their intrinsic reality is fully pacified. These should be understood in the same way as—where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over—has already been extensively explained. Therefore, apprehension does not exist.

> If apprehension does not exist
> Whether incorrect or correct,
> Who has misconception and
> Who has correct conception? (23:16)

174. TCE (p. 341) states *gal te mi rtag mi rtag ces, de ltar 'dzin pa log min pa.* MK(S) states *anitye nityam ity evaṁ yadi grāho viparyayaḥ* (see Siderits and Katsura 2013, 260). Here I have followed TCE.

If apprehension does not exist, whether incorrect or correct, who has misconception and who has correct conception? Moreover,

> For those who misconceive,
> Misconception is not possible.
> For those who don't misconceive,
> Misconception is not possible. (23:17)

> For those who now misconceive,
> Misconception is not possible. (23:18ab)

For those who misconceive, misconception is not possible. For those who don't misconceive, misconception is not possible. And for those who now misconceive, misconception is not possible. Just as these are impossible, so too [343] you should understand this in accordance with how—where one has gone, not gone, and that being gone over—were explained previously.

> You should analyze
> For whom misconception is possible. (23:18cd)

You should analyze for whom misconception is possible. Moreover,

> How could misconceptions
> That have not arisen come to exist?
> If misconceptions do not arise
> How could one with misconceptions exist? (23:19)

How could any misconceptions that have not arisen intrinsically come to exist? If misconceptions do not arise intrinsically, how could one with misconceptions exist?

> A thing does not arise from itself
> Nor does it arise from another.
> If it doesn't arise from itself or another
> How could one with misconceptions exist? (23:20)[175]

175. This verse is missing from some editions.

Furthermore,

> If the four such as the self, purity,
> Permanence, and pleasure exist,
> Then knowing a self, purity, permanence, [344]
> And pleasure would not be misconceptions. (23:21)

If the four such as the self, purity, permanence, and pleasure[176] exist, then because they exist, knowing a self, knowing purity, knowing permanence, and knowing pleasure would not be misconceptions.

But if, on reflection, you think that the four such as the self, purity, permanence, and pleasure do not exist, but the four such as the selfless and so on do exist, and misconception exists since these are apprehended in a distorted way, then I will explain this:

> If the four such as the self, purity,
> Permanence, and pleasure do not exist,
> Then selflessness, impurity, impermanence,
> And pain would not exist. (23:22)

If the four—such as the self, purity, permanence, and pleasure—do not exist, then because they do not exist, then the four such as selflessness, impurity, impermanence, and pain[177] would not exist. That is because they would lack [a basis of] reliance. Therefore, the misconception that is a causal factor[178] does not exist.

> Thus due to misconception ceasing,
> Ignorance ceases.
> If ignorance ceases,
> Then formations and so on cease. (23:23) [345]

176. The four distorted ways of viewing the five aggregates are to view them as: a self (*bdag, ātma*), pure (*sdug pa, śuci*), permanent (*rtag pa, nitya*), and pleasurable (*bde ba, sukha*).
177. The four undistorted ways of viewing the five aggregates are to view them as: selfless (*bdag med, anātma*), impure (*mi sdug pa, aśuci*), impermanent (*mi rtag pa, anitya*), and painful (*bsdug bsngal, duḥkha*).
178. The causal factor (*rgyu'i khyad par*) here refers to the misconception that gives rise to the twelve links of the forward order.

Thus due to misconception ceasing, ignorance ceases. If ignorance ceases, then formations and so on cease.

> If one's afflictions
> Exist intrinsically,
> Then how could they be abandoned?
> Who could abandon that which exists? (23:24)

If one's afflictions exist intrinsically and if they are real, factual, and true, then how could they be abandoned? And because abandoning them is untenable, who could abandon that which exists?

But, on reflection, if you think afflictions do not exist intrinsically, and those that do not intrinsically exist should be abandoned, then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If one's afflictions
> Do not intrinsically exist,
> Then how could they be abandoned?
> Who could abandon that which does not exist? (23:25)

If one's afflictions do not intrinsically exist and if they were not real, factual, and true, then how could they be abandoned? And because abandoning them is untenable, who could abandon that which does not exist?

This is the twenty-third chapter, on the Critique of Misconception. [346]

24. Critique of the Noble Truths

[Abhidharmikas] object:

> If all these [beings] are empty
> There would be no emergence or destruction.
> And it follows that for you
> The four noble truths would not exist. (24:1)

If all these reincarnating beings are empty, there would be no emergence or destruction. Since they would not exist, it follows that the four noble truths would not exist for you.

> Since the four noble truths would not exist
> Knowledge, abandonment,
> Meditation, and manifestation
> Would not be tenable. (24:2)

Since the four noble truths would not exist, knowledge of suffering, abandonment of origin, meditation on the path, and manifestation of cessation would not be tenable.

> Since they would not exist
> The four results also would not exist.
> If the results do not exist, abiding in the result would not exist
> And those who enter [the result] would also not exist. (24:3) [347]

Since knowing suffering, abandoning origin, meditating on the path, and manifesting cessation would not exist, the four results of training in virtue also would not exist. If the results of training in virtue do not exist,

the eight types of beings[179] who enter and abide in the result would also not exist.

> If the eight beings do not exist
> The Saṅgha would not exist.
> Because the noble truths would not exist,
> Also the pure Dharma would not exist. (24:4)

If the eight beings do not exist, then the Saṅgha would not exist. Furthermore, because the noble truths would not exist, also the pure Dharma would not exist.

> If the Dharma and the Saṅgha do not exist
> How could the Buddha exist?
> As such, proclaiming [emptiness]
> Would harm the Three Jewels. (24:5)

If the pure Dharma and the Saṅgha do not exist, how could the Buddha exist? As such, proclaiming emptiness would harm the Three Jewels. Moreover,

> Emptiness harms the existence
> Of the effects produced by
> Nonvirtuous and virtuous action and
> All mundane conventional activity. (24:6) [348]

Emptiness, when apprehended, harms the existence of the effects produced by nonvirtuous and virtuous action and all mundane conventional activity. Hence no things are empty.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> We say that since you do not comprehend
> The need for emptiness, emptiness's [characteristics],

179. The eight are: (1–2) enterers and abiders in the state of stream entry, (3–4) enterers and abiders in the state of once returner, (5–6) enterers and abiders in the state of nonreturner, and (7–8) enterers and abiders in the state of arhat.

Or the meaning of emptiness;
Therefore you are harmed accordingly. (24:7)

You do not comprehend exactly just as they are the need for teaching emptiness, the characteristics of emptiness, and the meaning of emptiness; therefore you are harmed accordingly.

The Dharma taught by the buddhas
Is based on the two truths:
Mundane conventional truth
And ultimate truth. (24:8)

The Dharma taught by the bhagavān buddhas is based on the two truths. [349] That called "mundane conventional truth" refers to all phenomena that are seen to arise, since due to misconception the world does not comprehend all phenomena to be empty of an intrinsic reality. Since such states are true for obscured [minds], they are conventional truths.

Ultimate truth refers to all phenomena that are not seen to arise, since āryas understand misconception. Since such states are true for ultimate [minds], they are ultimate truths.

Whoever does not know
The difference between the two truths
Does not know the profound
Teachings of the Buddha (24:9)

In that regard those who do not know the difference between the two truths, the conventional and ultimate truths, do not know the profound teachings of the Buddha.

But, on reflecting on this, the meaning you may wish to express is "If ultimate truth refers to all phenomena not arising, what need is there for a second truth regarding conventional activity?"[180] To explain this, Nāgārjuna says:

180. Conventional activity (*tha snyad, vyavahāra*) here refers to ordinary actions and customary behaviors in everyday life that support training in ultimate truth.

The ultimate cannot be taught
Without depending on conventional activity.
Nirvana cannot be obtained
Without depending on the ultimate. (24:10)

Because the ultimate [truth] cannot be taught without depending on conventional activity, and because nirvana cannot be obtained without depending on the ultimate, therefore both truths must be set out.

Misinterpreting emptiness
Will ruin the dull-witted. [350]
It is like wrongly seizing a snake
Or wrongly performing knowledge mantras. (24:11)

Misinterpreting ultimate emptiness will ruin the dull-witted, and for them great harm will arise. For example, it is like wrongly seizing a snake will create a heightened threat of ruin and death. And for example, through wrongly performing knowledge mantras and secret mantras, and the decline of those activities, one will create a heightened threat of ruin and shortened life.

Due to this, the [Buddha's] mind was turned
From teaching this Dharma through realizing
The difficulty those with inferior [intelligence]
Have in comprehending this Dharma in depth. (24:12)

Due to this cause alone, the mind of the Bhagavān was turned from teaching this Dharma through realizing the difficulty those with inferior intelligence have in comprehending this Dharma in depth.

You seek to attribute fault
To us regarding emptiness,
But any refutation
Of emptiness is untenable. (24:13)

You seek to attribute fault to us regarding emptiness, but any refutation of the emptiness of [351] intrinsic reality is untenable. Moreover,

One for whom emptiness is possible
Everything is possible.
One for whom emptiness is not possible
Nothing is possible. (24:14)

One for whom the emptiness of intrinsic reality is possible, every mundane and transcendent state is possible. One for whom the emptiness of intrinsic reality is not possible, no mundane or transcendent state is possible.

Your own faults
You project on us,
Like one mounted on a horse,
Who forgets the horse. (24:15)

Your own faults you project on us, like one mounted on a horse who forgets the horse. Furthermore,

If you view things
As intrinsically existent,
Then you view things
As lacking causes and conditions. (24:16) [352]

If you view things as intrinsically existent, then you view things as lacking causes and conditions.

This would also harm
The effect and the cause; the agent, instrument,
And the action; as well as arising,
Ceasing, and the effect. (24:17)

Therefore this would also harm the effect and the cause; the agent, instrument, and the action; as well as arising, ceasing, and the effect.

That which is dependently arisen
We explain to be emptiness.
That which is dependently imputed
Is the middle way. (24:18)

That which is dependently arisen we explain to be emptiness. That which is dependently imputed is the middle way.

> Because phenomena that are not dependently arisen
> Do not exist in the least,
> Therefore phenomena that are not empty
> Do not exist in the least. (24:19)

In that regard, if something is existent, it would be dependently arisen and dependently imputed. Therefore, because phenomena that are not dependently arisen do not exist in the least, therefore phenomena that are not empty do not exist in the least. [353]

> If all these are not empty
> Emergence and destruction would not exist.
> It follows for you
> The four noble truths would not exist. (24:20)

If all these reincarnating beings are not empty, therefore emergence and destruction would not exist, then it follows for you the four noble truths would not exist because [emergence and destruction] would not exist. How is that?

> If not dependently arisen,
> How could suffering exist?
> It is said the impermanent is suffering
> And it does not intrinsically exist. (24:21)

If not dependently arisen, suffering would not exist. Why? Because it is said in sūtra, "The impermanent is suffering," and it does not exist due to an intrinsic reality.

> If it does not exist intrinsically
> What would come to arise again?
> Therefore origin does not exist
> For one who rejects emptiness. (24:22)

If suffering does not exist intrinsically, what would come to arise again, [354] because [if it did], it would exist intrinsically? Because [suffering] exists in that way, therefore origin does not exist, for one who rejects emptiness.

Cessation does not exist
For suffering that intrinsically exists.
But you reject cessation
Because you rigidly maintain intrinsic reality. (24:23)

For suffering that intrinsically exists, cessation does not exist because [suffering] would be indestructible. But then you reject cessation because you rigidly maintain intrinsic reality.

If the path intrinsically exists
Meditation would not be tenable.
But if you meditate on the path
It could not have an intrinsic reality. (24:24)

If the path is apprehended to exist intrinsically, meditation would not be tenable because it would be pointless. As such, since there would be no means of cultivating and establishing permanent phenomena, therefore meditation on the path would be untenable. But if you meditate on the path, it could not have an intrinsic reality.

When suffering, origin, and
Cessation do not exist,
What cessation of suffering [355]
Is obtained by the path? (24:25)

When the three phenomena of suffering, origin, and cessation do not exist, then at that time, what cessation of suffering can you assert is obtained by the path?

If it is not known
Through its intrinsic reality,
How can it be known?
Don't you know it endures due to its intrinsic reality? (24:26)

If suffering is not known through its intrinsic reality, then because it is not known through its intrinsic reality, how can it be known? But didn't you say it endures due to its intrinsic reality?

> Thus for you it is impossible
> To abandon, manifest,
> Meditate, and so too know,
> As well as [attain] the four results. (24:27)

Thus for you it is impossible to abandon origin, manifest cessation, meditate on the path, and so too know suffering, as well as [attain] the four results.

[The truth of] origin that has not been intrinsically abandoned cannot be abandoned because it has not been intrinsically abandoned. [The truth of] cessation that has not been intrinsically manifested [356] cannot be manifested because it has not been intrinsically manifested. [The truth of] the path that has not been intrinsically meditated upon cannot be meditated upon because it has not been intrinsically meditated upon. As such, the four actions of knowing, abandoning, manifesting, and meditating on the four noble truths are untenable.

Moreover, since [for you] the four results, stream enterer, once returner, nonreturner, and arhat, and the four acts would not exist, [your assertion] is untenable. Moreover,

> Since for those who affirm intrinsic reality,
> The nonobtainment of these results
> Would intrinsically exist,
> How could they be obtained? (24:28)

Since for those who affirm intrinsic reality, the nonobtainment of these results would intrinsically exist, how could these [results] be obtained?

> If these results do not exist, those who enter
> And abide in these results also would not exist.
> If those eight beings do not exist
> Then the Saṅgha also would not exist. (24:29)

If the results of training in virtue do not exist, then those eight beings who are beings who enter and abide in these results also would not exist. If those eight beings do not exist, [357] then the Saṅgha also would not exist. Moreover,

Because the four noble truths would not exist
The holy Dharma would also not exist.
If the Dharma and Saṅgha do not exist
How could the Buddha exist? (24:30)

It follows that for you, the Buddha
Would not depend on enlightenment.
It follows that for you, enlightenment
Would not depend on the Buddha (24:31)

For you, those whose unenlightened state
Intrinsically exists, who seek enlightenment
Through engaging in bodhisattva deeds,
Would not obtain enlightenment. (24:32)

One could never engage in
Virtuous or nonvirtuous acts.
How could one engage in actions that are not empty?
One cannot engage in actions that intrinsically exist. (24:33)

For you, effects derived from virtuous
Or nonvirtuous causes would not exist. [358]
For you, effects not derived from virtuous
Or nonvirtuous causes would not exist. (24:34)

If, for you, effects derived from virtuous
Or nonvirtuous causes exist,
Why then are effects derived from
Virtue and nonvirtue not empty? (24:35)

You reject as well
All mundane conventional activity,

And you reject emptiness
That is dependent origination. (24:36)

Action would become nothing at all
And initiating action would not exist.
If emptiness is rejected,
Even a nonagent would become an agent. (24:37)

But even if intrinsic reality were to exist,
Beings would lack diverse conditions,
They would be unarisen and unceasing,
And also endure eternally. (24:38)

Even if they don't exist by their intrinsic reality, reincarnating beings without exception would lack [359] diverse conditions, they would be unarisen and unceasing, and also endure eternally.

Hence, to the extent you hold to advocating intrinsic reality, then all these faults that have been comprehensively outlined would ensue. Moreover,

If they are not empty of intrinsic reality
There would be no obtainment of the unobtained,
Nor action to end suffering,
Nor also the abandonment of every affliction. (24:39)

If they are not empty of intrinsic reality, therefore there would be no obtainment of unobtained mundane and transcendent qualities, and regarding diverse existent states, there would be no [obtainment] of any of them. There would be no action to end suffering nor also the abandonment of every affliction.

Whoever sees dependent origination
Is one who sees
Suffering, origin,
Cessation, and the path (24:40)

Whoever sees dependent origination is one who sees these four facts of suffering, origin, cessation, and the path.

This is the twenty-fourth chapter, on the Critique of Noble Truths. [360]

25. Critique of Nirvana

[Abhidharmikas] object:

> If all these are empty,
> Emergence and destruction would not exist.
> Then from the abandonment and cessation of what
> Do you assert nirvana arises? (25:1)

If all these reincarnating beings are empty, then their emergence would not exist and their destruction would not exist. Because they don't exist, then from the abandonment and cessation of what do you assert nirvana arises? That is because, for you, abandonment and cessation are not tenable. But that cannot be so, for in not being empty, nirvana is obtained from abandoning afflictions and the aggregates ceasing.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If all these are not empty,
> Emergence and destruction would not exist.
> Then from the abandonment and cessation of what
> Do you assert nirvana arises? (25:2)

If all these reincarnating beings are not empty, then their emergence would not exist and their destruction would not exist. Because they don't exist, then from the abandonment and cessation of what do you assert nirvana arises? That is because for you, abandonment and cessation are not tenable. Hence, understand that attaining nirvana through such a process is untenable. But how could that be? [361]

Nirvana is said to be
Without abandonment, without obtainment,
Without annihilation, without permanence,
Without cessation, and without arising. (25:3)

Thus the characteristics of nirvana are imputed in this way. Moreover,

Nirvana is not a thing; [otherwise] it follows
It would possess the characteristics of aging and death.
A thing devoid of
Aging and death does not exist. (25:4)

First, nirvana is not a thing in any respect. If it were a thing, it follows that it would possess the characteristics of aging and death. Why? Because a thing devoid of aging and death does not exist. Moreover,

If nirvana is a thing
Nirvana would be conditioned.
Things that are not conditioned
Could never exist in any way. (25:5)

If nirvana is a thing, then nirvana would be conditioned. Why? Because things that are not conditioned could never exist in any way.

If nirvana is a thing,
How could one say nirvana is not dependent?
Things that are not dependent
Do not exist in any way. (25:6)

If you assert nirvana is a thing, then it is untenable to say nirvana is not dependent. Why? Because things that are not dependent [362] do not exist in any way. Hence nirvana is not a thing.

Objection: But nirvana is a nonthing.

Nāgārjuna responds:

If nirvana is not a thing
How could it be a nonthing? (25:7ab)

If, in that way, nirvana is not a thing, therefore it would not be a nonthing. Why? If things were established, then also nonthings would be established.

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Moreover,

Where nirvana is not a thing,
There it is not a nonthing. (25:7cd)

Where nirvana is asserted to be a thing, there it is not a nonthing [363] because it is inappropriate thus to call a thing a "nonthing." Hence nirvana is also not a nonthing. Moreover,

If nirvana is not a thing
How could nirvana be nondependent?
A nonthing not dependent
On anything does not exist (25:8)

If you assert nirvana is not a thing, then it would be untenable to say "nirvana is nondependent." Why? Because a nonthing not dependent on anything does not exist in the least. Hence nirvana is also not a nonthing.

Objection: But how can you say that about nirvana?

Nāgārjuna responds:

Things that come and go
Support or act as causes.
That which neither supports nor acts as a cause
Is taught to be nirvana. (25:9)

Things that come and go, support or act as the cause of the aggregates, due to not comprehending misconception. That which does not produce

the aggregates out of misconception, since it does not support them nor act as their cause, is taught to be nirvana. Moreover, [364]

> [The Lord] has said to abandon
> Emergence and destruction.
> Therefore it is logical that nirvana
> Is neither a thing nor a nonthing. (25:10)

Since the Lord has said to abandon emergence and destruction, therefore it is logical that nirvana is neither a thing nor a nonthing.

Objection: But nirvana is both a thing and a nonthing.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If nirvana were both
> A thing and a nonthing,
> Then liberation would be a thing
> And a nonthing, but that is illogical. (25:11)

If nirvana were both a thing and a nonthing, then liberation would be [both] a thing and a nonthing, but that is illogical because it is impossible that two mutually excluding states exist [together] at the same time. Moreover,

> If nirvana were both
> A thing and a nonthing,
> Then nirvana would not be nondependent
> Because it would depend on both. (25:12) [365]

If nirvana were both a thing and a nonthing, then nirvana would not be nondependent because that nirvana would depend on both things and nonthings. Since you do not assert this, therefore it is illogical so say nirvana is both a thing and a nonthing. Moreover, because this is illogical,

> How could nirvana be both
> A thing and a nonthing?

Nirvana is unconditioned,
And things and nonthings are conditioned. (25:13)

It is untenable that nirvana is both a thing and a nonthing. Why? Because nirvana is unconditioned, and both things and nonthings are conditioned. Hence, due to the factor of causation, it is illogical that nirvana is either a thing or a nonthing.

Objection: Nirvana is neither a thing nor a nonthing, but where both exist, that is nirvana.

Nāgārjuna responds:

How could nirvana be both
A thing and a nonthing?
These two cannot exist in the same place,
Just like light and darkness. (25:14) [366]

Also, it is not tenable that nirvana is both a thing and a nonthing. Why? Because it is illogical that these two mutually incompatible states exist together in the same place at the same time; for example, like light and darkness. Therefore, it is not logical to state, "Where both things and nonthings exist, there that is nirvana"

Objection: Nirvana is not a thing nor is it a nonthing.

Nāgārjuna responds:

The statement "Nirvana is
Not a thing nor a nonthing"
Would be established
If nonthings and things are established. (25:15)

Your statement "Nirvana is not a thing or a nonthing" is untenable. Why? If the mind makes exertion to clarify and apprehend that which is neither a thing nor a nonthing, and if nonthings and things are established

[by that mind, your statement] would be established. But since things and nonthings are not established, therefore it is not tenable to state, "Nirvana is neither a thing nor a nonthing." Furthermore,

> If nirvana were neither
> A thing nor a nonthing
> What is revealed by the statement, [367]
> "Nirvana is not a thing nor a nonthing"? (25:16)

If nirvana were neither a thing nor even a nonthing, then that which is not a thing nor a nonthing would not exist. Because they do not exist, what is revealed, illustrated, or signified by the statement, "Nirvana is not a thing nor a nonthing"? Hence it is illogical to state, "Nirvana is not a thing nor a nonthing." Because of that, nirvana is not tenable. In what way?

> The Lord has not revealed
> Whether after nirvana
> He exists, he does not exist,
> Both, or neither. (25:17)

> The Lord has not revealed
> Whether while living [in the world]
> He exists, he does not exist,
> Both, or neither. (25:18)

The Lord has not revealed, nor presented, nor held, nor signified whether after nirvana "He exists" or "He does not exist," or whether "He both exists and does not exist" or whether "He neither exists nor does not exist."

Because of that, therefore nirvana cannot be designated. If it does not exist, what could nirvana [368] come to be? Hence, nirvana would not be tenable in any way. Furthermore,

> Samsara is not different
> In the least from nirvana.
> Nirvana is not different
> In the least from samsara. (25:19)

If samsara is imputed in dependence on the continuum of the aggregates, then because these aggregates are empty of any intrinsic reality, [samsara] thus possesses the attribute of ultimately neither arising nor ceasing. From the first, this is all we have taught. Therefore, since all phenomena are equivalent in not arising and not ceasing, samsara is not different in the least from nirvana. And just as samsara is not different in the least from nirvana, so too nirvana is not different in the least from samsara.

> That which is the limit of nirvana
> Is the limit of samsara.
> A difference between the two
> Does not exist in the least. (25:20)

That which is the limit of nirvana is the perfect limit of samsara, the limit of nonarising, and the final limit of reality. Since they are equivalent in not being observed, [369] the slightest difference [between them] does not exist in the least.

> Any views regarding [the Buddha] after he has ceased,
> [The world] having an end, or being permanent and so on,
> Are dependent on nirvana,
> A final end, and an initial beginning. (25:21)

(1) Any view that asserts that after the Tathāgata has ceased he exists, he does not exist, he both exists and does not exist, or he neither exists or does not exist; (2) any view that asserts the world has an end, the world has no end, the world both has an end and has no end, or the world neither has an end nor has no end; (3) any view that asserts the world is permanent, the world is impermanent, the world is both permanent and impermanent, or the world is neither permanent nor impermanent; these are in order dependent on nirvana, the limit of the past, and the limit of the future.

> When all things are empty
> What has an end? What has no end?
> What has both an end and no end?
> What has neither an end nor no end? (25:22)

What is identical? What is distinct?
What is permanent? What is impermanent?
What is both permanent and impermanent? [370]
What is that which is neither? (25:23)

Pacifying all focal objects and
Pacifying mental fabrication is peace.
The Buddha has not taught
Any Dharma, to anyone, anywhere! (25:24)

This is the twenty-fifth chapter, on the Critique of Nirvana.

26. Critique of the Twelve Links of Existence

[Abhidharmikas] object: Since you have already taught entry to the ultimate meaning according to the Mahāyāna textual tradition, now please teach entry to the ultimate according to the Shrāvaka textual tradition.

Nāgārjuna responds:

> [Beings] obscured by ignorance take rebirth
> Through activating karmic formations
> Due to three types of formative factors.
> And due to karma they continue to reincarnate. (26:1)

Childlike beings who are obscured by ignorance take rebirth as hell beings and so on, through activating karmic formations, due to the three types of formative factors of body, speech, and mind. Due to such virtuous or nonvirtuous karma that are great, medium, or small formative factors, they continue to reincarnate as hell beings and so on.

> Consciousness conditioned by formations
> Enters reincarnation.
> After consciousness has made entry
> Name and form come to develop. (26:2)

In this regard, consciousness conditioned by formations enters reincarnation. Due to that, name and form come to develop. [371]

> When name and form have developed,
> The six bases come to arise.

In dependence on the six bases
Contact will arise. (26:3)

When name and form have developed, the six bases come to arise from the development of name and form. Contact will arise in dependence on the six bases.

It solely arises in dependence on
The eye,[181] form, and attention.
Just so, consciousness arises
In dependence on name and form. (26:4)

This is the sequence in which contact arises, for it solely arises in dependence on the eye, form, and attention. Just so, consciousness arises in dependence on name and form.

That which unites the three,
Eye,[182] form, and consciousness,
Is contact. From that contact,
Feeling fully arises. (26:5)

In that way that which unites the three, eye, form, and consciousness, is contact. From that contact, feeling fully arises.

Due to the condition of feeling, there is craving,
Craving that arises for the object of feeling.
When craving arises, it takes up
Four types of appropriation. (26:6)

Due to the condition of feeling, there is craving, and craving arises for the object of feeling. When craving arises, it takes up four types of appropriation. [372]

181. TCE (p. 371) states *ming dang gzugs dang dran byed la, brten nas skye ba kho na yin.* MK(S) states *cakṣuḥ pratītya rūpaṁ ca samanvāhāram eva ca* (see Siderits and Katura 2013, 311). Here I follow MK(S).
182. TCE (p. 371) states *ming dang gzugs dang dang rnam par shes, gsum po 'dus pa gang yin pa.* MK(S) states *saṁnipās trayāṇāṁ yo rūpavijñānacakṣuṣām* (see Siderits and Katsura 2013, 312). Here I follow MK(S).

If appropriation exists, the existence
Of the appropriator arises.
If there is no appropriation,
One is liberated, and existence will not arise. (26:7)

If appropriation exists, the existence of the appropriator arises. If appropriation does not exist, then one is liberated, and one's existence will not arise. At times, because [beings] are associated with appropriation, therefore existence will arise.

That existence is also the five aggregates.
From existence, birth arises,
Then aging and death, sorrow,
Grief and lamentation, suffering, (26:8)

Mental pain, and disturbance.
They fully arise from birth.
Thus, this entire mass
Of suffering comes to arise. (26:9)

Understand that existence is also the five aggregates. From existence, birth arises. From birth arise aging and death, sorrow, grief and lamentation, suffering, mental pain and disturbance. Thus this entire mass of suffering that is an accumulation of pure absolute suffering comes to arise. [373]

Therefore the intelligent do not engage
In creating the root of samsara.
Thus the unintelligent are agents,
But the intelligent are not because they see reality. (26:10)

Therefore the intelligent do not engage in creating the root of samsara. Thus, the unintelligent are agents of karmic formation, but the intelligent are not. Why? Because they see reality.

If ignorance ceases,
Formations also will not arise.
The cessation of ignorance
Is due to meditating on just that knowledge. (26:11)

In this regard, if ignorance ceases, then formations also will not arise.

The cessation of ignorance is achieved due to cultivating meditation on just that knowledge of the twelve links. [374]

> Due to the cessation of one,
> Another will not manifest.
> Thus this entire mass of suffering
> Will come to completely cease. (26:12)

Due to the cessation of one link of existence, another link of existence will not manifest. Thus this entire mass of suffering that is an accumulation of pure absolute suffering will come to completely and definitely cease.

You should fully understand entry to these twelve links of existence from the extensive presentation in Sūtra and Abhidharma. This has been presented here in an abbreviated form.

This is the twenty-sixth chapter, on the Critique of the Twelve Links. [375]

27. Critique of View

[Abhidharmikas] say: Now please teach those irrational views, based on extreme [positions], that are [listed in] sūtras compatible with the Shrāvaka Vehicle.

Nāgārjuna responds:

Any view such as "I existed in the past,"
Or "I did not exist in the past,"
Or "The world is permanent," and so on,
Is dependent on an initial beginning. (27:1)

Any view such as "I existed in the past," as stated in the *Sūtra Enumerating All Contaminants*,[183] or "I did not exist in the past," or based on that, "The world is permanent," and so on, is dependent on an initial beginning.

Any view such as "I will exist in future as another"
Or "I will not exist in future as another,"
Or "The world has an end," and so on,
Is dependent on a final end. (27:2)

Any view such as "I will exist in future as another," or "I will not exist in future as another," or based on that, "The world has an end," and so on, [is a view] dependent on a final end. Such views are not tenable. Due to what logic? Nāgārjuna explains:

183. *Zag pa thams cad sdom pa'i rnam grangs zhes bya ba'i mdo sde*. This sūtra has not yet been identified.

It is not tenable so say
"I existed in the past" [376]
Because that which existed in former lives
Is not this self of the present. (27:3)

It is not tenable to say, "I existed in the past." Why? Because that which existed in former lives is not this self of the present.

You may think that is the self,
But appropriation is distinct.
What is that self of yours
That exists apart from appropriation? (27:4)

But in reflecting on this you may think, "What fault arises if that which existed in past lives is just the self of the present?" Then we shall now address this. If that which existed in past lives is the self of the present, then the appropriation [of past and present lives] would not be distinct. But their appropriation is distinct, otherwise it follows the self would exist apart from appropriation. But can you state what is that self of yours that exists apart from appropriation? Otherwise [your assertion] will be understood as utterly untenable.

When you agree that a self apart from
Appropriation does not exist,
Then if appropriation is the self
Your self would not exist. (27:5)

But in reflecting on this, when you agree to the idea that a self apart from appropriation does not exist, then if appropriation is the self, your self would not exist. [377]

Appropriation is not the self
Because it rises and perishes.
How could that appropriated
Become the appropriator? (27:6)

Also it is not tenable to say that appropriation itself is the self. Why?

Because that appropriating [the aggregates] arises and ceases, since it rises and perishes. Such [characteristics] are not the characteristics of the self. Moreover, how could that appropriated become the appropriator? For numerous errors would follow.

It is not tenable that the self is different
From that appropriated.
If it were different, it is logical that it would be apprehended
Without appropriation, but it is not apprehended. (27:7)

But in reflecting on this you may think the appropriator is different from that appropriated; then this should be explained [as follows]: It is not tenable that the self is different from the appropriated [aggregates]. Why? Because if [the self] were different, it is logical that even without appropriation, [the self] would exist as apprehended by the sense faculties such as the eyes, but it is not apprehended.

In that case, [the self] is not different from
That appropriated, nor is it that appropriated.
The self does not exist without appropriation,
Neither is it ascertained as nonexistent. (27:8)

In that case, the self is not different from the appropriated [aggregates], nor is it that appropriated. [The self] does not exist without appropriation, neither is it ascertained as absolutely nonexistent. Therefore it is also untenable to state, "The self arose in the past, due to its being permanent." Now, [378]

It is also not tenable to say,
"I did not exist in the past,"
As this self is not different from
What arose in past lives. (27:9)

Now, it is also not tenable to say, "I did not exist in the past." Why? Because this self is not different from what arose in past lives.

If this were different,
Then it would arise even if that did not exist.

It would remain there in just that way,
Or it would be born here without having died there.
(27:10)

If this [present self] were different [from that past self], then it would arise even if [that past self] did not exist. Furthermore, that past [self] would remain there in just that way, or it would be born here without having died there. [379]

[Many errors] would ensue, such as
It would be annihilated, karma would expire,
And karma committed by one person
Would be experienced by another, and so on. (27:11)

In that case, many errors would ensue, such as [the past self] would be annihilated, karma would expire, and karma committed by one [person] would be experienced by another, and so on.

The self does not arise from an unarisen state,
For it would follow erroneously that
The self would either be produced
Or arise causelessly. (27:12)

Moreover, in that case, it follows that the self would arise from an unarisen state. But it is not the case that the self arises from an unarisen state, for even then it would erroneously follow that the self would either be produced or arise causelessly. But that is unacceptable. Therefore it is also untenable to say, "The self did not arise in the past since it is permanent."

The views that in the past
"I existed," "I did not exist,"
"Both," or "Neither,"
These are untenable. (27:13)

When fully investigated in this way the views that in the past, "I existed in the past," [380] "I did not exist in the past," "I both existed and did not

exist in the past," or "I neither existed nor did I not exist in the past," these are untenable. Now,

> The views that in future
> "I will exist as another,"
> Or "I will not exist as another,"
> Are similar to those of the past. (27:14)

Now, regarding the views that in future, "I will exist as another in future" and "I will not exist as another in future," one should reflect that they are similar to those [views] of the past. Any errors raised with regard to the past should be specifically understood to apply here. Furthermore,

> If that god is this human,
> Then [that being] would be permanent.
> But that god would not have been born
> Because that which is permanent has no birth. (27:15)

If that god is this human, then [that being] would be permanent. Otherwise, that god would not have been born. Why? Because that which is permanent has no birth. [381] Because one who is a god is not a human, and one who is unborn is not [a god], therefore [that god] is not permanent.

> If a human were different from a god,
> Then [that being] would be impermanent.
> If a human and a god were different,
> A continuum would be untenable (27:16)

If a human were different from a god, then [that being] would be impermanent. But due to the logical proof of [the existence of] a continuum, it is untenable that a human is different from a god. Therefore [that being] is not impermanent.

> If one part was a god
> And one part was a human,
> He would be permanent and impermanent;
> But that is impossible. (27:17)

If one part was a god and one part was a human, then the permanent [self] would be permanent, and the impermanent [self] would be impermanent. But because having two selves is impossible, therefore it is not the case that a permanent [self] is permanent and an impermanent [self] is impermanent.

If he were established as both
Permanent and impermanent,
Accordingly, he would be established
As neither permanent nor impermanent. (27:18) [382]

If [that person] were established as both "permanent" and "impermanent," then accordingly he would be established as neither permanent nor impermanent. Because he is not established as permanent or impermanent, therefore he is also not established as neither permanent nor impermanent.

If an entity had come from somewhere,
And then were to proceed elsewhere,
Then he would be permanent,
Since he is beginningless. But he doesn't exist. (27:19)

If an entity [or person] had come from somewhere and then proceeded to a specific place elsewhere, then he would be permanent,[184] since he would be beginningless. If examined with wisdom, an entity [or person] that came from somewhere and proceeded to a specific place elsewhere does not exist anywhere. Therefore he is not permanent, since he does not exist from beginningless [time].

If the permanent does not exist in the least,
What would be impermanent?
The permanent, the impermanent,
And that which is both is refuted. (27:20)

184. TCE (p. 382) states *de phyir de la thog med pas, rtag par gyur na de yang med.* MK(S) states *yadi tasmād anādis saṁsāraḥ syān na cāsti sa* (see Siderits and Katsura 2013, 328). Here I have followed TCE.

When investigated thus with wisdom, if the permanent[185] does not exist in the least, what would be impermanent? The permanent that is permanent, the impermanent that is impermanent, and that which is [both] not permanent and [383] not impermanent, what could they be?

Hence the four [lemmas] concerning an initial beginning, such as [the person] is permanent, not permanent, and so on, are untenable.

Now I will explain just how those four [lemmas] concerning a final end such as [the world] has an end, has no end, and so on, are untenable.

Objection: How are they untenable?

Nāgārjuna responds:

> If the world has an end,
> How could there be a world beyond?
> If the world has no end,
> How could there be a world beyond? (27:21)

It is untenable to say, "The world has an end" Why? If the world beyond were to exist, then the end[186] of the world would not exist. But since the world beyond also exists, therefore it is untenable to say the world has an end.

It is untenable to say, "The world has no end." Why? If the world has no end, then the world beyond would not exist. But since the world beyond also exists, therefore since the world without end would also exist, then also the world without end is untenable.

But if you ask, "Why are these two untenable?" then Nāgārjuna explains:

> Because this continuum of aggregates
> Is similar to the flame of a lamp,
> Therefore it is also illogical [to say]
> It has a final end or has no final end. (27:22) [384]

Because this continuum of aggregates is similar to the flame of a lamp,

185. TCE (p. 382) states *rtag pa* in the root text but *dngos po* in the commentary. I have changed the commentary to match the root text.

186. TCE (p. 383) states *'jig rten pha rol*. Here I follow the Peking and Narthang versions (TCE p. 383 note 2), which state: *'jig rten mtha'*.

which occurs due to the power of the assembly of causes and conditions, therefore it is also illogical to state that the world "has a final end" or "has no final end."

But if you ask, "Why is that illogical?" then Nāgārjuna explains:

> If past [aggregates] disintegrated, and
> [Other] aggregates were not produced
> In dependence on those aggregates,
> Then the world would have an end (27:23)

If the past aggregates disintegrated, and other aggregates were not produced in dependence on those aggregates, then the world would have an end. But because that is not so, therefore it is untenable to state, "The world has an end."

> If past [aggregates] did not disintegrate, and
> [Subsequent] aggregates were not produced
> In dependence on those aggregates,
> Then the world would not have an end (27:24)

If past aggregates did not disintegrate, and subsequent aggregates were not produced in dependence on those aggregates, then the world would not have an end. But because that is not so, therefore it is untenable to state, "The world has no end." Master Āryadeva also stated:[187]

> The convergence of the listener, the topic,
> And the speaker is extremely rare.
> Therefore, in brief, samsara
> Neither possesses nor lacks an end. (vii:5)

Now, it is untenable to state, "When the world has an end, [385] it has an end; when it has no end, it has no end." Why? I will explain:

187. CŚ, vii:5. TCE (p. 384): *nyan pa po dang mnyan bya dang, smra po 'byung ba shin tu dkon, de phyir mdor na 'khor ba ni, mtha' yod ma yin mtha' med min.* Derge (D 3846: 8a6): *nyan po mnyan bya 'chad po rnams, 'byung ba shin tu rnyed dka' ste, des na mdor na yod pa ni, mtha' med ma yin mtha' bcas min.*

If one part had an end,
And one part had no end,
The world would [both] have an end
And not have an end, but that is illogical. (27:25)

If one part had an end and one part had no end, then the world would [both] have an end and not have an end. In that case [both] things and selves would have two [parts,] but this is not tenable.

How could the appropriator
Disintegrate in one part and
Not disintegrate in another part?
Thus, that is illogical. (27:26)

By any logical means, how could the appropriator disintegrate in one part and not disintegrate in another part? Because [one thing] being both permanent and impermanent does not exist, indeed, that is illogical.

How could that appropriated
Disintegrate in one part and
Not disintegrate in one part?
Thus, that is also illogical. (27:27)

From any perspective, [how could] that appropriated disintegrate in [386] one part and not disintegrate in one part? Because [one entity] being [both] permanent and impermanent is completely untenable, thus, that is illogical. Therefore because [both] things and selves having two [parts] is untenable, the world having an end and not having an end is untenable.

Now, it is also untenable to say the world neither has an end nor has no end. Why? I will explain this:

If both having an end
And not having an end were established,
Accordingly neither having an end
Nor not having an end would be established. (27:28)

If both having an end and not having an end were established, then accordingly neither having an end and nor not having an end would be

established. Because having an end and not having an end is not established, therefore neither having an end nor not having an end is not established.

Hence, due to such investigation, the four [lemmas] concerning a final end, such as [the world] having an end and not having an end, and so on, are not tenable.

> Again, because all things are empty—
> Where, for whom, which, and
> For what reason—would the views
> Of eternalism and so on arise? (27:29) [387]

Again, because all things are empty, where in terms of time and place, for whom in terms of person, which in terms of view, and for what reason in terms of cause, would the views of eternalism and so on arise?

> I pay homage to Gautama,
> Who, motivated by compassion,
> Taught the holy Dharma
> For the abandonment of all [false] views. (27:30)

I pay homage to him, Gautama—of the lineage of bhagavān buddhas, utterly amazing, inconceivable, peerless, and unfathomable—who, motivated by compassion, taught the holy Dharma for the abandonment of all [false] views.

This is the twenty-seventh chapter, on the Critique of View.

The *Fundamental Middle Way Verses* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*) called *Wisdom* (*Prājñā*) presents Great Vehicle Abhidharma, perfectly elucidates ultimate reality, and clarifies the system of the Perfection of Wisdom. The great master Ārya Nāgārjuna possessed invincible wisdom and compassion, and distinguished the supreme system of the Tathāgata's vehicle. Once he had accomplished the [bodhisattva] level of the joyous, he departed for the pure field of Sukhāvatī, and there in the world system of Radiant Light, he will become the Tathāgata Prājñāsaṁbhava. [388]

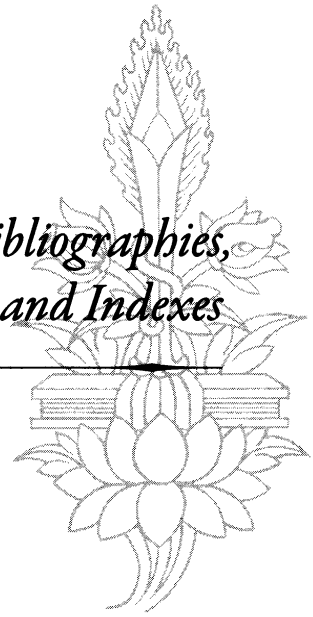
The commentary to this work, called *Buddhapālita*, teaches the definitive meaning of the Great Vehicle, and by eliminating the stain of erroneous

views, it resolves the system of the Perfection of Wisdom and clarifies the ultimate truth. Venerable Master Buddhapālita composed many explanatory treatises that affirmed the words of Mañjushrī. And through entering the Mahāyāna, he completed the path by proceeding to the special abode for accomplishing the realization of mantra.

The Indian abbot Jñānagarbha and editor-translator Chokro Lui Gyaltsen translated and settled this work.

Appendix
Tibetan Names (Phonetic-Transliterated Equivalents)

Phonetic Rendition	Wylie Transliteration
Butön	Bu ston
Chokro Lui Gyaltsen	Cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan
Chone	Co ne
Derge	sDe dge
Gö Lotsāwa	'Gos lo tsā ba (Gzhon nu dpal)
Jey Tsong Khapa	rJe Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa
Kawa Paltsek	Ka ba dpal brtseg
Narthang	sNar thang
Patsab Nyimadrak	Pa tshab nyi ma grags
Sera Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltsen	Se ra rje btsun chos kyi rgyal mtshan
Tang Sagpa (Zhang Thang Sagpa Yeshé Jungné)	Thang sag pa (Zhang thang sag pa Ye shes 'byung gnas)
Trisong Detsen	Khri srong lde brtsan



Glossary, Bibliographies, and Indexes

Glossary
English-Tibetan-Sanskrit Glossary

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
abandonment	spang ba	prahāṇa
abyss	g.yang sa	prapatā
action	las	karma
activity, action	bya ba	kriyā
afflicted being	kun nyon bcas	saṁkliṣṭa
affliction	nyon mongs	kleśa
aging	rga	jarā
aging and death	rga shi	jarāmaraṇa
agent	byed pa po	kartā, kāraka
aggregate	phung po	skandha
annihilated	chad pa	uccheda
antecedent condition, immediately preceding condition	de ma thag rkyen	samanantarapratyaya
appropriated	nyer bar blang ba	upatta
appropriation, grasping	nyer bar len pa	upādāna
appropriator	nye bar len pa po	upādātṛ
arising	skye ba	utpāda
arising of arising	skye ba'i skye ba	utpādotpāda

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
arising, occurrence, emergence	'byung ba	saṁbhava
assembly	tshogs pa nyid	sāmagrī
atoms	rdul phran	aṇu
attachment	'dod chags	rāga
attraction	sdug pa	śubha
aversion	zhe ldang	dveṣa
basis	gzhi	vastu
basis characterized	mtshan nyid kyi gzhi	
basis of characteristics		lakṣyaṁ
beings	'gro ba	jagat
birth	skye ba	jāti
bound	'ching ba	badhyante
causal condition	rgyu rkyen	hetupratyaya
cause	rgyu	hetu
celibacy	tshangs spyod	brahmacarya
characteristics	mtshan nyid	lakṣaṇa
clearly delineated	rab tu ston pa	vibhāvinā
clinging	sred pa	tṛṣṇā
cloth	snam bu	paṭa
coexistent	lhan cig nyid	sahabhāva
coexistent things	lhan gcig dngos po	sahabhāva
common usage	'jig rten gyi tha snyad	lokavyavahāra
conceptuality	kun rtog	saṁkalpa
conceptuality, conception	rnam rtog	vikalpata

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
condition	rkyen	pratyaya
conditioned phenomena	'dus byas	saṁskṛta
consciousness	rnam shes	vijñāna
contact	reg pa	sparśa, saṃsparśa
contingent relation	med na mi byung ba	
continuum	rgyun	saṁtāna
continuum of existence	srid rgyun	bhavasaṁtata
contradictory	dgag pa	vipratiṣiddha
contradictory phenomena	mi mthun pa'i chos	vidharma
conventional activity	tha snyad	vyavahāra
conventional speech	'jig rten gyi tha snyad	lokavyavahāra
conventional terminology	tha snyad kyi tshig	
core essence	snying po	
correct	yang dag pa	samyak
correct conception	phyin ci ma log	aviparyaya
craving	sred pa	tṛṣṇa
creator	dbang phyug	īśvara
critique	brtag pa	parīkṣā
cycle [in samsara]	'khor ba	saṁsaranti
dark green	ngon pa nyid	nīla
darkness	mun pa	tama
death	shi	maraṇam
deceptive phenomena	slu ba'i chos	moṣadharma
delusion	gti mug	moha
demerit	bsod nams ma yin	apuṇya
dependent	brten pa	pratītya

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
dependent designation, imputed interdependently	rten nas gdags pa	upādāya prajñapti
dependent imputation	brten nas gdags pa	prajñaptir upādāya
dependent origination, dependently arisen	rten cing 'brel par 'byung ba	pratītyasamutpāda
derived from intention	bsam pa	cetayitvā
designated	gdags par bya	prajñāpyate
destination	bgrod par bya ba	gantavya
destruction	'jig pa	vyaya, vibhava
destruction of karma	las 'jig pa	karmavadhāda
devoid of intrinsic reality, lack of intrinsic reality	rang bzhin med	niḥsvabhāva
difference	gzhan nyid	anyatva
different	gzhan	anyat
direct perception	mngon sum	pratyakṣa
disclosed	btags pa	prajñāpita
disintegrating	'jig pa	bhaṅga
distinct	tha dad pa	pṛthak
distinct	gzhan nyid	pṛthaktva
distinct entities, distinction	tha dad nyid	pṛthak
distinct things	tha dad pa'i dngos po	pṛthagbhāva
distinction	chen po nyid	mahatā
divine eye	lha'i mig	divyacakṣu
dominant condition	bdag rkyen	adhipatipratyaya
earlier	snga	purva
earth	sa	pṛthivī

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
effect	'bras bu	phala, kārya
elements	khams	dhātu
emergence	'byung ba	udaya
empty	stong pa	śūnya
empty of intrinsic reality	ngo bo nyid stong pa	
endeavor	rtsom pa	
enduring	gnas pa	sthiti
enjoyment	longs spyod	paribhoga
enter	'jug par 'gyur	saṃniviśa
entity	dngos po	bhāva
equivalent	mtshungs pa	tulya
essential nature	rang bzhin	prakṛti, svabhāva
establish	'jug pa	niṣpādaka
established entity	dngos po gnas pa	bhāva vyavasthita
established intrinsically	ngo bo nyid las 'grub pa	
establishing cause	sgrub byed rgyu	nirvatakahetu
eternal, permanent	rtag pa	śāśvata
eternalism	rtag par 'dzin pa	śāśvata
excite	chags par byed pa	rañjaka
existence	srid pa	bhava
existence, existent	yod	astitva
existent	yod pa	sata, sat
existent things	dngos po yod pa	
extrinsic reality	gzhan gyi dngos po	parabhāva

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
eye	mig, spyan	cakṣu
fabrication, mental fabrication, speculation	spros pa	prapañca
fact	chos	dharma
false	brdzun	mṛṣā
fault	skyon	doṣa
fault of great confusion	'dres pa'i skyon chen po	saṁkīrṇadoṣa
feeling	tshor ba	vedanā
final end	phyi mtha', phyi ma	paścimam
fire	me	agni
firm ideas	'dzin pa stug po	ghanagrāha
first phase	thog ma med	agraṁ
first, beginning	thog ma	agraṁ
flattened	brdung ba	kuṭṭita
flesh eye	sha'i spyan	māṁsacakṣu
form, material form	gzugs	rūpa
formal reason	gtan tshigs	
formation, formative factor, creation, creative factor	'du byed	saṁskāra
free from	med pa	nirmukta
fuel	bud shing	indhana
fully disintegrate	rab tu 'jig pa	pralopadharma
fully pacifies	nye bar zhi ba	upaśama
future	ma 'ong pa	anāgata
generating cause	skyed par byed pa'i rgyu	

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
generic state, universal	spyi	sāmānya
goer	'gro ba po	gantṛ
goer goes	'gro ba po 'gro'o	gantā gacchati
going	'gro ba	gati
grass	rtsi rkyang	
great elements	'byung ba chen po	mahābhūta
Great Sage	thub pa chen po	mahāmuni
has an intrinsic self	bdag nyid yod pa	ātma
hearing	thos pa	śrāvaṇa
heat	tsha ba	uṣṇa
higher rebirth	mtho ris	svarga
identical	gcig nyid, gcig pa nyid	ekatva
identicality, with that nature	de bcas nyid	satattva
illogical	mi rigs	na yujate
illusion	sgyu ma	māyā
imperishable	mi zad pa	akṣaya
impermanent	mi rtag pa	anitya
incorrect	log pa	mithyā
infinite regress	thug med	anavasthā
initial beginning	sngon mtha', sngon	ādi, pūrva
instrument	byed pa	kāraṇaṁ
intelligent	mkhas pa	vidva
intention	sems pa	cetanā
intrinsic reality	ngo bo nyid	svabhāva

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
intrinsic reality of things	dngos po rnams kyi rang bzhin	svabhāva bhāvānāṁ
intrinsic self	bdag nyid, rang gi bdag nyid	ātmā
irrational	mi rigs	na yukta
its own state, to abide in its own state	gnas skabs de	avasthā
jujube shrub	rgya shug	bandara
knowledge	shes pa	jñāna
knowledge mantra	rig sngags	vidyā
knowledge, complete knowledge	yongs su shes pa	parijñā, parijñāna
lack an intrinsic self	bdag nyid med pa	anātma
lack of intrinsic reality	ngo bo nyid med pa nyid	niḥsvabhāvata
lamp	sgron me	
last phase, last, end	tha ma	avaraṁ
later	phyi	apara, uttara
leaf	lo ma	pattra
liberated	'grol ba	mucyate
liberated being	grol ba	vimukta
liberation	byang grol	mokṣa
light, lamp	mar me	pradīpa
liquidity	gsher ba	drava
logic	rigs pa	yuktī
lord	bcom ldan 'das	bhagavān
lotus	pad ma	padma

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
make evident	gsal bar byed pa	ajyate
make known	shes par byed	jñāyate
make perceptible	mngon par byed pa	gṛhyate
makes manifest	gzung bar byed pa	prakaṭyat
manifestation	mngon du bya ba	sākṣi
meditation	bsgom pa	bhāvana
mental equipoise	mnyam par bzhag pa'i yid	samāhitamanas
mental fabrication	spros byed pa	prapañca
mental formation	sems mngon par 'du byed pa	
merit	bsod nams	puṇya
middle way	dbu ma'i lam	madhyamā
middle, middle phase	dbu	madhya
mine	bdag gi	ātmīya
mirage		marīci
misconception, distortion	phyin ci log	viparyaya
misinterpret	lta nyes	
mobility	g.yo ba	tarala
movement	g.yo ba	cesta
movement	bskyod pa	viṣpanda
mundane conventional activity	'jig rten pa'i tha snyad kun	saṁvyavahārān ca laukikān
mundane conventional activity	'jig rten pa'i tha snyad	saṃvyavahāra
mundane conventional truth	'jig rten pa'i kun rdzob kyi bden pa	loka saṁvṛtti satyaṁ

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
mutually dependent	phan tshun ltos pa	nirapekṣau parasparam
name and form	ming dang gzugs	nāmarūpa
negative tendencies	phra rgyas	anuśaya
neuter		paṇḍaka
nihilism	chad par lta	uccheda
nonconditions	rkyen min	apratyayā
nonempty	mi stong	aśūnya
nonerroneous suchness	ma nor ba de bzhin nyid	avitathatā
nonexistence, nonexistent	med	nāstitva, asata
nonexpiration	chud mi za ba	avipraṇāśa
nongoer	'gro ba po ma yin pa	agantṛ
nonindicative	rnam par rig byed min pa	avijñapti
nonthing, nonexistence of a thing	dngos med, dngos po med pa	abhāva
nonviolence	mi 'tshe ba	ahiṁsā
nonvirtuous	mi dge ba	akuśala
not empty	stong min	aśūnya
not intrinsically existent	ngo bo nyid las med pa	nāsti svabhāvata
not perish	zad pa med pa	avyaya
not real	yang dag pa nyid ma yin	na tathya, atathya
object	las	karman, karmaka
object seen	blta bya	draṣṭavya
object-field	spyod yul	gocara

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
object, focal object, basis	dmigs pa	ārambaṇa, ālambaṇa
objective condition	dmigs rkyen	ālambaṇapratyaya
objects	don	artha
objects of knowledge, knowledge objects	shes bya	jñeya
objects of valid cognition	gzhal bya	prameya
obscured [minds], conventional	kun rdzob	saṁvṛtti
one who is attached	chags pa	rakta
one who is excited	chags par bya ba	rañjanīya
opposing phenomena	mi bzlogs pa'i chos	viparyayadharma
opposite, antithesis	gnyen po	pratipakṣa
other-produced	gzhan gyis byas pa	parakāra
its own intrinsic reality, intrinsic reality	bdag gi dngos po	svabhāva
its own intrinsic state	bdag nyid	
past	'das pa	atīta
peaceful	zhi ba	śiva
perfect reality just as it is	yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du	
perfect reality of things	dngos po rnams kyi yang dag pa ji lta ba nyid	
perishable	zad pa	kṣaya
permanence	rtag pa nyid	nityatva
permanent	rtag pa	nitya
person	gang zag	puruṣa
phenomena	chos	dharma

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
pleasant	yid du 'ong	iṣṭa
pleasure	bde ba	sukha
possible, tenable	'thad pa	
present	da ltar ba, da ltar byung	pratyutpanna
primary elements	'byung ba	bhūta
produced by another		parakṛtaṁ
produced by another, other-produced	gzhan gyis byas	parakṛtaṁ
product	bya ba	kāryaṁ
product	byas pa	kṛtaka
product	'bras bu	kārya
proposition	dam bca'	pratijñā
purity	sdug pa	śuci
purpose of instruction	gdags pa'i don	prajñaptyarthaṁ
quality	yon tan	guṇa
real	yin par gyur pa	sat
real	yang dag pa nyid	tathya
real action	las yin par gyur	sadbhūta karma
real agent	byed pa po yin par gyur pa	sadbhūta kāraka
reality	chos nyid	dharmatā
reflection		pratibimbha
refutation	spong par byed pa	adhilaya
reincarnating beings	'gro ba	jagat
repulsion	mi sdug pa	aśubha
restrained	spong ba	virataya

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
retinue	'khor	parivāra
revealed	ston pa	deśita
same	de nyid	
same method	rim pa mtshungs	sama krama
sameness	de nyid	
samsaric beings	'khor ba po	saṁsartṛ
scripture	lung	āgama
seed	sa bon	bīja
seeing	lta ba	darśana
seer	lta ba po	draṣṭā
self	bdag	ātman
self-produced	bdag gis byas	svayaṁ kṛtaṁ
sense base, base	skye mched	āyatana
sense faculty, faculty	dbang po	indriya
sensory objects	'dod pa'i yon tan	kāmaguna
sesame oil	til mar	taila
sesame seeds	til dag	tila
simultaneous	lhan cig	saha
sin, negativity	sdig pa	pāpa
single entity	gcig nyid	ekatva
sky-flowers	nam mkha' me tog	khapuṣpa
solidity	sra ba	kaṭhiṇa
space	nam mkha'	ākāśa
speech	ngag	vāc
stable	brtan pa nyid	dhruvatva

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
straw mat	re lde	kaṭa
subsided	nub pa	astaṁgata
substance	rdzas	dravya
suchness	de bzhin nyid	tathatā
teachings	bstan pa	śāsana
that being gone over	bgom pa	gamyamāne
that to be established	sgrub pa	sādhya
that which causes destruction	'jig par byed pa	vināśaka
that which causes endurance	gnas par byed pa	sthāpaka
that which causes generation	skyed par byed pa	utpādaka
that which establishes, establishment	sgrub par bya ba	sādhana
thatness, reality	de kho na	tattva
thing, entity	dngos po	bhāva
thinks	rtog par byed	kalpaya
those who advocate things are real	dngos por smra ba	bhāvavādin
time	dus	kāla
together	lhan cig nyid	yuktā
transition	kun tu 'pho ba	saṁkramaṇa
treatise	bstan bcos	śāstra
tree	shing ljon	vṛkṣa
ultimate	don dam pa	paramārtha
ultimate reality	don dam pa'i de kho na nyid	paramārthatattva
ultimate truth	don dam pa'i bden pa	paramārtha satyaṁ

ENGLISH	TIBETAN	SANSKRIT
unconditioned phenomena	'dus ma byas	saṃskṛta
undifferentiated suchness	gzhan ma yin pade bzhin nyid	ananyatathatā
unintelligent	mi mkhas	avidva
unmistaken	'khrul pa med pa	avyabhicārin
unpleasant	yid du mi 'ong	aniṣṭa
unreal	ma yin par gyur pa	asat
unreal action	las ma yin par gyur pa	asadbhūta karma
unreal agent	byed pa po ma yin par gyur pa	asadbhūta kāraka
unrestrained	mi spang ba	avirataya
valid cognition	tshad ma	pramāṇa
victor, conqueror	rgyal ba	jina
view	lta ba	dṛṣṭi
virtuous	dge ba	kuśala
viscous	snum pa	snigdha
wandering ascetic	kun tu rgyu	parivrājaka
where one has gone	song	gata
where one has not gone	ma song	agata
without an intrinsic self	bdag nyid med	anātmā
without annihilation	chad pa med pa	anuccheda
without arising	skye ba med pa	anutpāda
without cessation	'gag pa med pa	anirodha
without coming	'ong ba med pa	anāgama
without distinction	don tha dad ma yin pa	anekārtha
without going	'gro ba med pa	nirgama

English	Tibetan	Sanskrit
without identity	don gcig ma yin pa	anānārtha
without permanence	rtag pa med pa	aśāśvata

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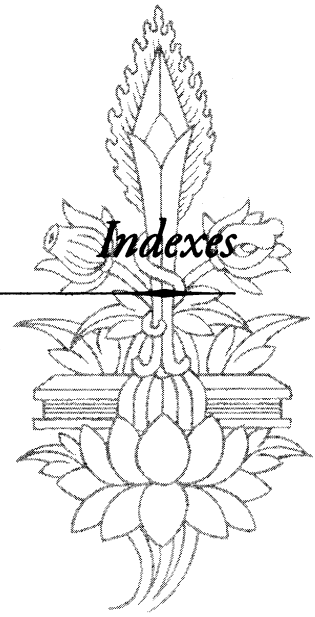

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